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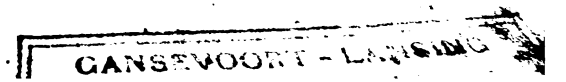

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DEVEREUX.

A TALE.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "PELHAM" AND "THE DISOWNED."

"He that knows most men's manners, must of necessity
Best know his own, and mend those by example.
——————— Pure and strong spirits
Do, like the fire, still covet to fly upward."

The Queen of Corinth, Act 2, Scene 4.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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DEVEREUX.

BOOK IV.

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER IV.

Paris—A Female Politician, and an Ecclesiastical One—Sundry other Matters

THE ex-minister was received both at Calais and at Paris with the most gratifying honours—he was then entirely the man to captivate the French. The beauty of his person, the grace of his manner, his consummate taste in all things, the exceeding variety and sparkling vivacity of his conversation, enchanted them. In later life he has grown more reserved and profound, even in habitual intercourse, and attention is now fixed to the solidity of the diamond, as at that time one was too dazzled to think of any thing but its brilliancy.

While Bolingbroke was receiving visits of state, I busied myself in inquiring after a certain Madame de Balzac. The reader will remember that the envelope of that letter which Oswald had brought to me at Devereux Court, was signed by the letters C. de B. Now, when Oswald disappeared after that dreadful night to which even now I can scarcely bring myself to allude, these initials occurred to my remembrance, and Oswald having said they belonged to a lady formerly intimate with my father, I inquired of my mother if she could guess to what French lady such initials would apply. She, with an evident pang of jealousy, mentioned a Madame de Balzac; and to this lady I now resolved to address myself, with the faint hope of learning from her some intelligence respecting Oswald. It was not difficult to find out the abode of one who in her day had played no inconsiderable *rôle* in that comedy of

errors,—the great world. She was still living at Paris: what Frenchwoman would, if she could help it, live any where else? "There are a hundred gates," said the witty Madame de Choisi to me, "which lead into Paris, but only two roads out of it,—the convent, or (odious word!) the grave."

I hastened to Madame Balzac's hotel. I was ushered through three magnificent apartments into one, which to my eyes seemed to contain a throne: upon a nearer inspection I discovered it was a bed. Upon a large chair, by a very bad fire—it was in the month of March—sat a tall, handsome woman, excessively painted, and dressed in a manner, which, to my taste, accustomed to English finery, seemed singularly plain. I had sent in the morning to request permission to wait on her, so that she was prepared for my visit. She rose, offered me her cheek, kissed mine, shed several tears, and in short testified a great deal of kindness towards me. Old ladies who have flirted with our fathers, always seem to claim a sort of property in the sons!

Before she resumed her seat she held me out at arm's length. "You have a family likeness to your brave father," said she, with a little disappointment; "but—"

"Madame de Balzac would add," interrupted I, filling up the sentence which I saw her *bienveillance* had made her break off, "Madame de Balzac would add, that I am not so good looking. It is true: the likeness is transmitted to me within rather than without; and if I have not my father's privilege to be admired, I have at least his capacities to admire," and I bowed.

Madame de Balzac took three large pinches of snuff. "That is very well said," said she gravely: "very well indeed! not at all like your father though, who never paid a compliment in his life. Your clothes, by the by, are in exquisite taste: I had no idea that English people had arrived to such perfection in the fine arts. Your face is a little too long! You admire Racine of course? How do you like Paris?"

All this was not said gayly or quickly: Madame de Balzac was by no means a gay or a quick person. She belonged to a peculiar school of Frenchwomen, who affected a little languor, a great deal of stiffness, an indifference to forms when forms were to be used by themselves, and an unrelaxing demand of forms when forms were to be observed to them by others. Added to this, they talked

plainly upon all matters, without ever entering upon sentiment. This was the school she belonged to; but she possessed the traits of the individual as well of the species. She was keen, ambitious, worldly, not unaffectionate nor unkind; very proud, a little of the devotee—because it was the fashion to be so—an enthusiastic admirer of military glory, and a most prying, searching, intriguing, and yet talentless schemer of politics.

"Like Paris!" said I, answering only the last question, and that not with the most scrupulous regard to truth. "Can Madame de Balzac think of Paris, and not conceive the transport which must inspire a person entering it for the first time? But I had something more endearing than a stranger's interest to attach me to it; I longed to express to my father's friend, my gratitude for the interest which I venture to believe she on one occasion manifested towards me."

"Ah! you mean my caution to you against that terrible De Montreuil. Yes, I trust I was of service to you *there*."

And Madame de Balzac then proceeded to favour me with the whole history of the manner in which she had obtained the letter she had sent me, accompanied by a thousand anathemas against those *atroces Jésuites*, and a thousand eulogia on her own genius and virtues. I brought her from this subject, so interesting to herself, as soon as decorum would allow me: and I then made inquiry if she knew aught of Oswald, or could suggest any mode of obtaining intelligence respecting him. Madame de Balzac hated plain, blunt, blank questions, and she always travelled through a wilderness of parentheses, before she answered them. But at last I did ascertain her answer, and found it utterly unsatisfactory. She had never seen or heard any thing of Oswald since he had left her charged with her commission to me. I then questioned her respecting the character of the man, and found Mr. Marie Oswald had little to plume himself upon in that respect. He seemed, however, from her account of him, to be more a rogue than a villain; and from two or three stories of his cowardice, which Madame de Balzac related, he appeared to me utterly incapable of a design so daring and systematic as that of which it pleased all persons who troubled themselves about my affairs, to suspect him.

Finding, at last, that no further information was to be gained on this point, I turned the conversation to Montreuil. I found, from Madame de Balzac's very abuse of him, that he enjoyed a great reputation in the country, and a great

favour at court. He had been early befriended by Father la Chaise, and he was now especially trusted and esteemed by the successor of that Jesuit—Le Tellier;—Le Tellier, that rigid and bigoted servant of Loyola—the sovereign of the King himself—the destroyer of the Port Royal, and the mock and terror of the bedevilled and persecuted Jansenists. Besides this, I learned what has been before pretty clearly evident—viz: that Montreuil was greatly in the confidence of the Chevalier, and that he was supposed already to have rendered essential service to the Stuart cause. His reputation had increased with every year, and was as great for private sanctity as for political talent.

When this information, given in a very different spirit from that in which I retail it, was over, Madame de Balzac observed—"Doubtless you will obtain a private audience with the King?"

"Is it possible, in his present age and infirmities?"

"It ought to be to the son of *Le Maréschal* Devereux."

"I shall be happy to receive Madame's instructions how to obtain the honour: her name would, I feel, be a greater passport to the royal presence, than that of a deceased soldier; and Venus's cestus may obtain that grace, which would never be accorded to the truncheon of Mars!"

Was there ever so natural and so easy a compliment? My Venus of fifty smiled.

"You are mistaken, Count," said she; "I have no interest at court: the Jesuits forbid that to a Jansenist; but I will speak this very day to the Bishop of Frejus: he is related to me, and will obtain so slight a boon for you with ease. He has just left his bishopric: you know how he hated it. Nothing could be pleasanter than his signing himself, in a letter to Cardinal Quirini—'*Fleuri, évêque de Fréjus par l'indignation divine.*' The king does not like him much: but he is a good man on the whole, though Jesuitical: he shall introduce you."

I expressed my gratitude for the favour, and hinted that possibly the relations of my father's first wife, the haughty and ancient house of La Tremouille, might save the Bishop of Fréjus from the pain of exerting himself on my behalf.

"You are very much mistaken," answered Madame de Balzac: "priests point the road to court as well as to heaven; and warriors and nobles have as little to do with the former, as they have with the latter, the unlucky Duc de Villers only excepted—a man whose ill fortune is enough to destroy all the laurels of France. *Ma foi!* I

believe the *pauvre Duc* might rival in luck that Italian poet, who said, in a fit of despair, that if he had been bred a hatter, men would have been born without heads."

And Madame de Balzac chuckled over this joke, till seeing that no farther news was to be gleaned from her, I made my adieu, and my departure.

Nothing could exceed the kindness manifested towards me by my father's early connexions. The circumstance of my accompanying Bolingbroke, joined to my age, and an address which, if not animated or gay, had not been acquired without some youthful cultivation of the graces, gave me a sort of *éclat* as well as consideration. And Bolingbroke, who was only jealous of superiors in power, and who had no equals in any thing else, added greatly to my reputation by his panegyrics.

Every one sought me—and the attention of society at Paris would, to most, be worth a little trouble to repay. Perhaps, if I had liked it, I might have been the rage; but that vanity was over. I contented myself with being permitted into society as an observer, without a single wish to become the observed. When one has once outlived the ambition *de société*, I know not a greater affliction than an over-attention: and the Spectator did just what I should have done in a similar case, when he left his lodgings, "because he was asked every morning how he had slept." In the immediate vicinity of the court, the king's devotion, age, and misfortunes threw a damp over society; but there were still some sparkling circles, who put the king out of the mode, and declared, that the defeats of his generals made capital subjects for epigrams. What a delicate and subtle air did hang over those *soirées*, where all that were bright and lovely, and noble and gay, and witty and wise, were assembled in one brilliant cluster! Imperfect as my rehearsals must be, I think the few pages I shall devote to a description of these glittering conversations, must still retain something of that original piquancy which the *soirées* of no other capital could rival or appreciate.

One morning, about a week after my interview with Madame de Balzac, I received a note from her, requesting me to visit her that day, and appointing the hour.

Accordingly I repaired to the house of the fair politician. I found her with a man in a clerical garb, and of a benevolent and prepossessing countenance. She introduced him to me as the Bishop of Fréjus, and he received me with an air very uncommon to his countrymen, viz.,

with an ease that seemed to result from real good nature, rather than artificial grace.

"I shall feel," said he, quietly, and without the least appearance of paying a compliment, "very glad to mention your wish to his majesty; and I have not the least doubt that he will admit to his presence one who has such hereditary claims on his notice. Madame de Maintenon, by the way, has charged me to present you to her, whenever you will give me the opportunity. She knew your admirable mother well, and for her sake, wishes once to see you. You know, perhaps, Monsieur, that the extreme retirement of her life renders this message from Madame de Maintenon an unusual and rare honour."

I expressed my thanks;—the bishop received them with a paternal rather than a courtier-like air, and appointed a day for me to attend him to the palace. We then conversed a short time upon indifferent matters, which, I observed, the good bishop took especial pains to preserve clear from French politics. He asked me, however, two or three questions about the state of parties in England—about finance and the national debt—about Ormond and Oxford; and appeared to give the most close attention to my replies. He smiled once or twice, when his relation, Madame de Balzac, broke out into sarcasms against the Jesuits, which had nothing to do with the subjects in question.

"Ah, *ma chère cousine*," said he, "you flatter me by showing, that you like me not as the politician, but the private relation—not as the Bishop of Fréjus, but as André de Fleury."

Madame de Balzac smiled, and answered by a compliment. She was a politician for the kingdom, it is true, but she was also a politician for herself. She was far from exclaiming, with Pindar, "Thy business, O my city, I prefer willingly to my own." Ah, there is a nice distinction between politics and policy, and Madame de Balzac knew it. The distinction is this: Politics is the art of being wise for others! Policy is the art of being wise for oneself.

From Madame de Balzac's I went to Bolingbroke. "I have just been offered the place of Secretary of State, by the English king on this side of the water," said he;—"I do not, however, yet like to commit myself so fully. And, indeed, I am not unwilling to have a little relaxation of pleasure, after all these dull and dusty travails of state. What say you to Boulainvilliers to-night—you are asked?"

"Yes, all the wits are to be there—Anthony Hamilton—and Fontenelle—young Arouet—Chaulieu, that charming old man. Let us go, and polish away the wrinkles of our hearts. What cosmetics are to the face, wit is to the temper; and, after all, there is no wisdom like that which teaches us to forget."

"Come then," said Bolingbroke, rising, "we will lock up these papers, and take a melancholy drive, in order that we may enjoy mirth the better by and by."

CHAPTER V.

A Meeting of Wits—Conversation gone out to Supper in her Dress of Velvet and Jewels.

BOULAINVILLIERS! Comte de St. Saire! What will our great grandchildren think of that name? Fame is indeed a riddle! At the time I refer to, wit—learning—grace—all things that charm and enlighten—were supposed to centre in one word—*Boulainvilliers!* The good count had many rivals, it is true, but he had that exquisite tact peculiar to his countrymen, of making the very reputations of those rivals contribute to his own. And while he assembled them around him, the lustre of their *bons mots*, though it emanated from themselves, was reflected upon him.

It was a pleasant, though not a costly apartment, in which we found our host. The room was sufficiently full of people, to allow scope and variety to one groupe of talkers, without being full enough to permit those little knots and coteries which are the destruction of literary society. An old man of about seventy, of a sharp, shrewd, yet polished and courtly expression of countenance, of a great gayety of manner, which was now and then rather displeasingly contrasted by an abrupt affectation of dignity that, however, rarely lasted above a minute, and never withstood the shock of a *bon mot*, was the first person who accosted us. This old man was the wreck of the once celebrated Anthony Count Hamilton!

"Well, my Lord," said he to Bolingbroke, "how do you like the weather at Paris?—it is a little better than the merciless air of London—is it not? 'Slife!—even in June, one could not go open-breasted in those regions of cold

and catarrh—a very great misfortune, let me tell you, my Lord, if one's cambric happened to be of a very delicate and brilliant texture, and one wished to penetrate the inward folds of a lady's heart, by developing, to the best advantage, the exterior folds that covered his own."

"It is the first time," answered Bolingbroke, "that I ever heard so accomplished a courtier as Count Hamilton repine, with sincerity, that he could not bare his bosom to inspection."

"Ah!" cried Boulainvilliers, "but vanity makes a man show much that discretion would conceal."

"*Au diable* with your discretion!" said Hamilton, "'tis a vulgar virtue. Vanity is a truly aristocratic quality, and every way fitted to a gentleman. Should I ever have been renowned for my exquisite lace and web-like cambric, if I had not been vain? Never, *mon cher!* I should have gone into a convent and worn sackcloth, and, from *Count Antoine*, I should have thickened into *Saint Anthony*."

"Nay," cried Lord Bolingbroke, "there is as much scope for vanity in sackcloth, as there is in cambric; for vanity is like the Irish ogling master in the Spectator, and if it teaches the playhouse to ogle by candlelight, it also teaches the church to ogle by day! But, pardon me, Monsieur Chaulieu, how well you look! I see that the myrtle sheds its verdure, not only over your poetry, but the poet. And it is right that, to the modern Anacreon, who has bequeathed to Time a treasure it will never forego, Time itself should be gentle in return."

"Milord," answered Chaulieu, an old man who, though considerably past seventy, was animated, in appearance and manner, with a vivacity and life that would have done honour to a youth—"Milord, it was beautifully said by the Emperor Julian, that Justice retained the Graces in her vestibule. I see, now, that he should have substituted the word *Wisdom* for that of Justice."

"Come," cried Anthony Hamilton, "this will never do. Compliments are the dullest things imaginable. For God's sake let us leave panegyric to blockheads, and say something bitter to one another, or we shall die of *ennui*."

"*Vous avez raison*," said Boulainvilliers:—"Let us pick out some poor devil to begin with. Absent or present?—Decide which."

"Oh, absent," cried Chaulieu; "'tis a thousand times more piquant to slander than to rally! Let us commence

with his Majesty: Count Devereux, have you seen Madame Maintenon and her devout infant, since your arrival?"

"No!—the priests must be petitioned before the miracle is made public."

"What!" cried Chaulieu, "would you insinuate that his Majesty's piety is really nothing less than a miracle?"

"Impossible!" said Boulainvilliers, gravely,—"piety is as natural to kings as flattery to their courtiers: are we not told that they are made in God's own image!"

"If that were true," said Count Hamilton, somewhat profanely—"if that were true, I should no longer deny the impossibility of Atheism!"

"Fie, Count Hamilton, said an old gentleman, in whom I recognised the great Huet, "fie—wit should beware how it uses wings—its province is earth, not heaven."

"Nobody can better tell what wit is *not*, than the learned Abbé Huet!" answered Hamilton, with a mock air of respect.

"Psha!" cried Chaulieu, "I thought when we once gave the rein to satire it would carry us *pêle-mêle* against one another. But in order to sweeten that drop of lemon-juice for you, my dear Huet, let me turn to Milord Bolingbroke, and ask him whether England can produce a scholar equal to Peter Huet, who in twenty years wrote notes to sixty-two volumes of Classics,* for the sake of a prince who never read a line in one of them?"

"We have some scholars," answered Bolingbroke; "but we certainly have no Huet. It is strange enough, but learning seems to me like a circle: it grows weaker the more it spreads. We now see many people capable of reading commentaries, but very few, indeed, capable of writing them."

"True," answered Huet; and in his reply he introduced the celebrated illustration which is at this day mentioned among his most felicitous *bonsmots*. "Scholarship, formerly the most difficult and unaided enterprise of Genius, has now been made, by the very toils of the first mariners, but an easy and commonplace voyage of leisure. But who would compare the great men, whose very difficulties not only proved their ardour, but brought them the patience and the courage which alone are the parents of a genuine triumph, to the indolent loiterers of the present day, who have little of difficulty to conquer, have nothing of glory

to attain? For my part, there seems to me the same difference between a scholar of our days and one of the past, as there is between Christopher Columbus and the master of a packet-boat from Calais to Dover!"

"But," cried Anthony Hamilton, taking a pinch of snuff, with the air of a man about to utter a witty thing—"but what have we—we spirits of the world, not imps of the closet,"—and he glanced at Huet—"to do with scholarship? All the waters of Castaly which we want to pour into our brain, are such as will flow the readiest to our tongue."

"In short, then," said I, "you would assert that all a friend cares for in one's head is the quantity of talk in it?"

"Precisely, my dear Count," said Hamilton, seriously; "and to that maxim I will add another applicable to the opposite sex. All that a mistress cares for in one's heart is the quantity of love in it."

"What! are generosity, courage, honour, to go for nothing, with our mistress, then?" cried Chaulieu.

"No; for she will believe, if you are a passionate lover, that you have all those virtues: and if not, she won't believe that you have one."

"Ah! it was a pretty court of love in which the friend and biographer of Count Grammont learned the art!" said Bolingbroke.

"We believed so at the time, my lord; but there are as many changes in the fashion of making love as there are in that of making dresses. Honour me, Count Devereux, by using my snuff-box, and then looking at the lid."

"It is the picture of Charles the Second which adorns it—is it not?"

"No, Count Devereux, it is the diamonds which adorn it. His majesty's face I thought very beautiful while he was living; but now, on my conscience, I consider it the ugliest phiz I ever beheld. But I pointed your notice to the picture because we were talking of love; and Old Rowley believed that he could make it better than any one else. All his courtiers had the same opinion of themselves; and I dare say the *beaux garçons* of Queen Anne's reign would say, that not one of King Charley's gang knew what love was. Oh! 'tis a strange circle of revolutions, that love! Like the earth, it always changes, and yet always has the same materials."

"*L'amour—l'amour—toujours l'amour*, with Count Anthony Hamilton!" said Boulainvilliers. "He is always on

that subject; and, *sacre bleu!* when he was younger, I am told he was like Cacus, the son of Vulcan, and breathed nothing but flames."

"You flatter me," said Hamilton. "Solve me now a knotty riddle, my Lord Bolingbroke. Why does a young man think it the greatest compliment to be thought wise, while an old man thinks it the greatest compliment to be told he has been foolish?"

"Is love foolish, then?" said Lord Bolingbroke.

"Can you doubt it?" answered Hamilton; "it makes a man think more of another than himself! I know not a greater proof of folly!"

"Ah—*mon aimable ami*"—cried Chaulieu; "you are the wickedest witty person I know. I cannot help loving your language, while I hate your sentiments."

"My language is my own—my sentiments are those of all men," answered Hamilton; but are we not, by the by, to have young *Arouet* here to-night? What a charming person he is!"

"Yes," said Boulainvilliers. "He said he should be late; and I expect Fontenelle too, but *he* will not come before supper. I found Fontenelle this morning, conversing with my cook on the best manner of dressing asparagus. I asked him the other day, what writer, ancient or modern, had ever given him the most sensible pleasure? After a little pause, the excellent old man said—'Daphnus'—'Daphnus!' repeated I—'who the devil is he?' 'Why,' answered Fontenelle, with tears of gratitude in his benevolent eyes, 'I had some hypochondriacal ideas that suppers were unwholesome; and Daphnus is an ancient physician, who asserts the contrary; and declares,—think, my friend, what a charming theory!—that the moon is a great assistant of the digestion!'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the *Abbé de Chaulieu*. "How like Fontenelle! what an anomalous creature 't is! He has the most kindness and the least feeling of any man I ever knew. Let Hamilton find a pithier description for him if he can!"

Whatever reply the friend of the *preux Grammont* might have made, was prevented by the entrance of a young man of about twenty-one.

In person he was small, slight, and very thin. There was a certain affectation of polite address in his manner and mien, which did not quite become him; and though he was received by the old wits with great cordiality, and on

a footing o. perfect equality; yet, the inexpressible air which denotes birth, was both pretended to, and wanting. This, perhaps, was however owing to the ordinary inexperience of youth; which, if not awkwardly bashful, is generally awkward in its assurance. Whatever its cause, the impression vanished directly he entered into conversation. I do not think I ever encountered a man so brilliantly, yet so easily witty. He had but little of the studied allusion—the antithetical point—the classic metaphor, which chiefly characterize the wits of my day. On the contrary, it was an exceeding and *naïve* simplicity, which gave such unrivalled charm and piquancy to his conversation. And while I have not scrupled to stamp on my pages some faint imitation of the peculiar dialogue of other eminent characters, I must confess myself utterly unable to convey the smallest idea of his method of making words irresistible. Contenting my efforts, therefore, with describing his personal appearance—interesting, because that of the most striking literary character it has been my lot to meet—I shall omit his share in the remainder of the conversation I am rehearsing, and beg the reader to recall that passage in Tacitus, in which the great historian says, that in the funeral of Junia, "the images of Brutus and Cassius outshone all the rest, from the very circumstance of their being the sole ones excluded from the rite."

The countenance, then, of Marie Francis Arouet, (since so celebrated under the name of Voltaire,) was plain in feature, but singularly striking in effect; its vivacity was the very perfection of what Steele once happily called "physiognomical eloquence." His eyes were dark, fiery rather than bright, and so restless that they never dwelt in the same place for a moment;* his mouth was at once the worst and the most peculiar feature of his face: it betokened humour, it is true; but it also betrayed malignancy—nor did it ever smile without sarcasm. Though flattering to those present, his words against the absent, uttered by that bitter and curling lip, mingled with your pleasure at their wit a little fear at their causticity. I believe no one, be he as bold, as callous, or as faultless as human nature can be, could be one hour with that man and not feel ap-

* The reader will remember that this is a description of Voltaire as a very young man. I do not know any where a more impressive, almost a more ghastly contrast, than that which the pictures of Voltaire, grown old, present to Lavilliere's picture of him at the age of twenty-four; and he was some what younger than twenty-four at the time of which the Count now speaks. —Ed.

prehension. Ridicule, so lavish, yet so true to the mark—so wanton, yet so seemingly just—so bright, that while it wandered round its target, in apparent, though terrible playfulness, it burned into the spot, and engraved there a brand, and a token indelible and perpetual;—this no man could witness, when darted towards another, and feel safe for himself. The very caprice and levity of the jester seemed more perilous, because less to be calculated upon, than a systematic principle of bitterness or satire. Bolingbroke compared him, not unaptly, to a child who has possessed himself of Jupiter's bolts, and who makes use of those bolts in sport, which a God would only have used in wrath.

Arouet's forehead was not remarkable for height, but it was nobly and grandly formed, and, contradicting that of the mouth, wore a benevolent expression. Though so young, there was already a wrinkle on the surface of the front, and a prominence on the eyebrow which showed that the wit and the fancy of his conversation were, if not regulated, at least contrasted, by more thoughtful and lofty characteristics of mind. At the time I write, this man has obtained a high throne among the powers of the lettered world. What he may yet be, it is in vain to guess: he may be all that is great and good, or—the reverse; but I cannot but believe that his career is only begun. Such men are born monarchs of the mind; they may be benefactors or tyrants: in either case they are greater than the kings of the physical empire, because they defy armies and laugh at the intrigues of state. From themselves only come the balance of their power, the laws of their government, and the boundaries of their realm.

We sat down to supper. "Count Hamilton," said Boulainvilliers, "are we not a merry set for such old fellows? Why, excepting Arouet, Milord Bolingbroke, and Count Devereux, there is scarcely one of us under seventy. Where, but at Paris, would you see *bons vivans* of our age? *Vivent la joie!—la bagatelle!—l'amour!*"

"*Et le vin de Champagne,*" cried Chaulieu, filling his glass; "but what is there strange in our merriment? Philemon, the comic poet, laughed at ninety-seven. May we all do the same!"

"You forget," cried Bolingbroke, "that Philemon died of the laughing."

"Yes," said Hamilton; "but, if I remember right, it

was at seeing an ass eat figs. Let us vow, therefore, never to keep company with asses!"

"Bravo, Count," said Boulainvilliers, "you have put the true moral on the story. Let us swear by the ghost of Philemon, that we will never laugh at an ass's jokes—practical or verbal."

"Then we must always be serious, except when we are with each other," cried Chaulieu. "Oh, I would sooner take my chance of dying prematurely at ninety-seven, than consent to such a vow!"

"Fontenelle," cried our host, "you are melancholy. What is the matter?"

"I mourn for the weakness of human nature," answered Fontenelle, with an air of patriarchal philanthropy. "I told your cook three times about the asparagus; and now—taste it. I told him not to put too much sugar, and he has put none. Thus it is with mankind—ever in extremes, and consequently ever in error! Thus it was that Luther said, so felicitously and so truly, that the human mind was like a drunken peasant on horseback—prop it on one side, and it falls on the other."

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried Chaulieu, "*le pauvre Secrétaire de l'Académie des Sciences!* Who would have thought one could have found so much morality in a plate of asparagus! Taste this *salsifis*."

"Pray, Hamilton," said Huet, "what *jeu de mots* was that you made yesterday at Madame D'Epernonville's, which gained you such applause?"

"Ah, repeat it, Count," cried Boulainvilliers; "'t was the most classical thing I have heard for a long time."

"Why," said Hamilton, laying down his knife and fork, and preparing himself by a large draught of the champagne—"why, Madame D'Epernonville appeared without her *tour;* you know, Lord Bolingbroke, that *tour* is the polite name for false hair. '*Ah, sacre!*' cried her brother, courteously, '*ma sœur, que vous êtes laide aujourd'hui—vous n'avez pas votre tour!*' '*Voilà, pourquoi elle n'est pas sibelle* (*Cybele*),'" answered I.

"Excellent! famous!" cried we all, except Huet, who seemed to regard the punster with a very disrespectful eye. Hamilton saw it. "You do not think, Monsieur Huet, that there is wit in these *jeux de mots*—perhaps you do not admire wit at all?"

"Yes, I admire wit as I do the wind. When it shakes the trees, it is fine; when it cools the wave, it is refresh-

ing; when it steals over flowers, it is enchanting; but when, Monsieur Hamilton, it whistles through the keyhole, it is unpleasant."

"The very worst illustration I ever heard," said Hamilton, coolly. "Keep to your classics, my dear Abbé. When Jupiter edited the work of Peter Huet, he did with wit, as Peter Huet did with Lucan, when he edited the classics—he was afraid it might do mischief, and so left it out altogether."

"Let us drink!" cried Chaulieu; "let us drink!" and the conversation was turned again.

"What is that you say of Tacitus, Huet?" said Boulainvilliers.

"That his wisdom arose from his malignity," answered Huet. "He is a perfect penetrator* into human vices; but knows nothing of human virtues. Do you think that a good man would dwell so clingingly on what is evil? Believe me—no! A man cannot write much and well upon virtue without being virtuous, nor enter minutely and profoundly into the causes of vice without being vicious himself."

"It is true," said Hamilton; "and your remark, which affects to be so deep, is but a natural corollary from the hackneyed maxim, that from experience comes wisdom."

"But for my part," said Boulainvilliers, "I think Tacitus is not so invariably the analyzer of vice as you would make him. Look at the Agricola and the Germania."

"Ah! the Germany, above all things!" cried Hamilton, dropping a delicious morsel of *sanglier*, on its way from hand to mouth, in his hurry to speak. "Of course, the historian, Boulainvilliers, advocates the Germany, from its mention of the origin of the feudal system—that incomparable bundle of excellencies, which Le Comte de Boulainvilliers has declared to be *le chef d'œuvre de l'esprit humain;* and which the same gentleman regrets, in the most pathetic terms, no longer exists in order that the seigneur may feed upon *des gros morceaux, de bœuf demi-cru*, may hang up half his peasants *pour encourager les autres*, and ravish the daughters of the defunct *pour leur donner quelque consolation.*"

"Seriously, though," said the old Abbé de Chaulieu, with a twinkling eye, "*the last* mentioned evil, my dear Hamilton, was not without a little alloy of good."

* A remark similar to this the reader will probably remember in Huetiana, and will, I hope, agree with me in thinking it showy and untrue.—Ed.

"Yes," said Hamilton, "if it was only the daughters; but perhaps the seigneur was not too scrupulous with regard to the wives."

"Ah! shocking, shocking!" cried Chaulieu, solemnly. "Adultery is, indeed, an atrocious crime. I am sure I would most conscientiously cry out with the honest preacher—'Adultery, my children, is the blackest of sins. I do declare, that I would rather have *ten* virgins in love with me than *one* married woman!'"

We all laughed at this enthusiastic burst of virtue from the chaste Chaulieu. And *Arouet* turned our conversation towards the ecclesiastical dissensions between Jesuits and Jansenists, that then agitated the kingdom. It was then that Bolingbroke used that magnificent illustration, so significant of all those ecclesiastical quarrels, in which indulging the worst passions is termed zeal for the best cause; and we prove beyond a doubt how intensely we love God, by showing with what delightful animosity we can hate one another! "The priests," said Bolingbroke, "remind me of the nurses of Jupiter—they make a great clamour, in order to drown the voice of their God."

"Bravissimo!" cried Hamilton. "Is it not a pity, messieurs, that my Lord Bolingbroke was not a Frenchman? He is almost clever enough to be one."

"If he would drink a little more, he would be," cried Chaulieu, who was glowing gloriously *plein de boisson*.

"What say you, Morton?" exclaimed Bolingbroke; "must we not drink these gentlemen under the table for the honour of our country?"

"A challenge! a challenge!" cried Chaulieu. "I march first to the field!"

"Conquest or death!" shouted Bolingbroke. And the rites of Minerva were forsaken for those of Bacchus.

CHAPTER VI.

A Court, Courtiers, and a King.

"I THINK it was the second day after this "feast of reason" that Lord Bolingbroke deemed it advisable to retire to Lyons till his plans of conduct were ripened into deci-

sion. We took an affectionate leave of each other; but before we parted, and after he had discussed his own projects of ambition, we talked a little upon mine. Although I was a Catholic and a pupil of Montreuil, although I had fled from England, and had nothing to expect from the House of Hanover, I was by no means favourably disposed towards the Chevalier and his cause. I wonder if this avowal will seem odd to Englishmen of the next century. —To Englishmen of the present one, a Roman Catholic, and a lover of priestcraft and tyranny, are two words for the same thing; as if we could not murmur at tithes and taxes—insecurity of property—or arbitrary legislation, just as sourly as any other Christian community. No! I never loved the cause of the Stuarts—unfortunate, and therefore interesting, as the Stuarts were: by a very stupid, and yet uneffaceable confusion of ideas, I confounded it with the cause of Montreuil, and I hated the latter enough to dislike the former: I fancy all party principles are formed much in the same manner. I frankly told Bolingbroke my disinclination to the Chevalier.

"Between ourselves be it spoken," said he, "there is but little to induce a wise man, in *your* circumstances, to join James the Third. I would advise you rather to take advantage of your father's reputation at the French court, and enter into the same service he did. Things wear a dark face in England for you, and a bright one every where else."

"I have already," said I, "in my own mind, perceived and weighed the advantages of entering into the service of Louis. But he is old—he cannot live long. People now pay court to parties—not to the king. Which party, think you, is the best—that of Madame de Maintenon?"

"Nay, I think not; she is a cold friend, and never asks favours of Louis for any of her family. A bold game might be played by attaching yourself to the Duchesse D'Orleans (the Duke's mother). She is at daggers-drawn with Maintenon, it is true, and she is a violent, haughty, and coarse woman; but she has wit, talent, strength of mind, and will zealously serve any person of high birth, who pays her respect. But she can do nothing for you till the king's death, and then only on the chance of her son's power. But—let me see—you say Fleuri, the bishop of Fréjus, is to introduce you to Madame de Maintenon?"

"Yes; and has appointed the day after to-morrow for that purpose."

"Well, then, make close friends with him—you will not find it difficult; he has a delightful address, and if you get hold of his weak points, you may win his confidence. Mark me—Fleuri has no *faux-brillant*, no genius, indeed, of very prominent order; but he is one of those soft and smooth minds which, in a crisis like the present, when parties are contending and princes wrangling, always slip silently and unobtrusively into one of the best places. Keep in with Fréjus—you cannot do wrong by it—although you must remember that at present he is in ill odour with the king, and you need not go with *him twice* to Versailles. But, above all, when you are introduced to Louis, do not forget that you cannot please him better than by appearing awe-stricken."

Such was Bolingbroke's parting advice. The bishop of *Fréjus* carried me with him (on the morning we had appointed) to Versailles. What a magnificent work of royal imagination is that palace! I know not in any epic a grander idea than terming the avenues which lead to it the roads to Spain, to Holland, &c. In London they would have been the roads to Chelsea and Pentonville!

As we were driving slowly along in the bishop's carriage, I had ample time for conversation with that personage, who has since, as the Cardinal de Fleuri, risen to so high a pitch of power. He certainly has in him very little of the great man; nor do I know any where so striking an instance of this truth—that in that game of honours which is played at courts, we obtain success less by our talents than our tempers. He laughed, with a graceful turn of badinage, at the political peculiarities of Madame de Balzac: and said that it was not for the uppermost party to feel resentment at the chafings of the under one. Sliding from this topic, he then questioned me as to the gayeties I had witnessed. I gave him a description of the party at Boulainvilliers'. He seemed much interested in this, and showed more shrewdness than I should have given him credit for, in discussing the various characters of the *literati* of the day. After some general conversation on works of fiction, he artfully glided into treating on those of statistics and politics, and I then caught a sudden but thorough insight into the depths of his policy. I saw that while he affected to be indifferent to the difficulties and puzzles of state, he lost no opportunity of gaining every particle of information respecting them; and that he made conversation, in which he was skilled, a vehicle for acquirine that

knowledge which he had not the force of mind to create from his own intellect, or to work out from the *written* labours of others. If this made him a superficial statesman, it made him a prompt one; and there was never so lucky a minister with so little trouble to himself.*

As we approached the end of our destination, we talked of the king. On this subject he was jealously cautious. But I gleaned from him, despite of his sagacity, that it was high time to make all use of one's acquaintance with Madame de Maintenon that one could be enabled to do; and that it was so difficult to guess the exact places in which power would rest after the death of the old king, that supineness and silence made at present the most profound policy.

As we alighted from the carriage, and I first set my foot within the palace, I could not but feel involuntarily, yet powerfully impressed, with the sense of the spirit of the place. I was in the precincts of that mighty court which had gathered into one dazzling focus all the rays of genius which half a century had emitted; the court at which Time had passed at once from the morn of civilization into its full noon and glory; the court of Condé and Turenne—of Villars and of Tourville;—the court where, over the wit of Grammont, the profusion of Fouquet, the fatal genius of Louvois, (fatal to humanity and to France,)—Love, real Love, had not disdained to shed its pathos and its truth, and to consecrate the hollow pageantries of royal pomp, with the tenderness, the beauty, and the repentance of La Vallière. Still over that scene hung the spells of a genius which, if artificial and cold, was also vast, stately, and magnificent—a genius which had swelled in the rich music of Racine—which had raised the nobler spirit and the freer thought of Pierre Corneille,†—which had given edge to the polished weapon of Boileau—which had lavished over the bright page of Molière—Molière, more wonderful than all—a knowledge of the humours and the hearts of men, which no dramatist, save Shakspeare, has surpassed. Within those walls still glowed, though now waxing faint and dim, the fame of that monarch, who had enjoyed, at least till his later day, the fortune of Augustus, unsullied by the crimes of Octavius. Nine times, since the sun of that mo-

* At his death appeared the following punning epigram:
"*Floruit* sine fructu
"*Defloruit* sine luctu."—Ed.

† Rigidly speaking, Corneille belongs to a period earlier than that of Louis XIV., though he has been included in the era formed by that reign.—Ed.

narch rose, had the Papal Chair received a new occupant! —Six sovereigns had reigned over the Ottoman hordes!— The fourth emperor, since the birth of the same era, bore sway over Germany!—Five Czars, from Michel Romanoff to the Great Peter, had held, over their enormous territory, the precarious tenure of their iron power!—Six kings had borne the painful cincture of the English crown;* two of those kings had been fugitives to that court—to the son of the last it was an asylum at that moment.

What wonderful changes had passed over the face of Europe during that single reign! In England only, what a vast leap in the waste of events, from the reign of the First Charles to that of George the First!—I still lingered —I still gazed, as these thoughts, linked to one another in an electric chain, flashed over me!—I still paused on the threshold of those stately halls which Nature herself had been conquered to rear!—Where, through the whole earth, could I find so meet a symbol for the character and the name which that sovereign would leave to posterity, as this palace itself afforded?—A gorgeous monument of regal state raised from a desert—crowded alike with empty pageantries and illustrious names—a prodigy of elaborate artifice, grand in its whole effect—petty in its small details; a solitary oblation to a splendid selfishness, and most remarkable for the revenues which it exhausted, and the poverty by which it is surrounded!

Fleuri, with his usual urbanity, an urbanity that, on a great scale, would have been benevolence, had hitherto indulged me in my emotions; he now laid his hand upon my arm, and recalled me to myself. Before I could apologize for my abstraction, the bishop was accosted by an old man of evident rank, but of a countenance more strikingly demonstrative of the little cares of a mere courtier than any I ever beheld.—"What news, Monsieur le Marquis?" said Fleuri, smiling.

"Oh! the greatest imaginable! the king talks of receiving the Danish minister on *Thursday*, which, you know, is his day of *domestic* business! What *can* this portend? Besides," and here the speaker's voice lowered into a whisper, "I am told by the Duc de la Rochefoucault, that the king intends, out of all ordinary rule and practice, to take physic to-morrow—I can't believe it—no, I positively can't;—but don't let this go farther!"

*Besides Cromwell; viz. Charles I., Charles II., James II., William and Mary, Anne, George I.

"Heaven forbid!" answered Fleuri, bowing, and the courtier passed on to whisper his intelligence to others. "Who 's that gentleman?" I asked.

"The Marquis de Dangeau," answered Fleuri; "a nobleman of great quality, who keeps a diary of all the king says and does. It will perhaps be a posthumous publication, and will show the world of what importance nothings can be made. I dare say, Count, you have already, in England, seen enough of a court to know, that there are some people who are as human echoes, and have no existence except in the noise occasioned by another."

I took care that my answer should not be a witticism, lest Fleuri should think I was attempting to rival him; and so we passed on in an excellent humour with each other.

We mounted the grand staircase, and came to an antichamber, which, though costly and rich, was not remarkably conspicuous for splendour. Here the bishop requested me to wait for a moment. Accordingly I amused myself with looking over some engravings of different saints. Meanwhile my companion passed through another door, and I was alone.

After an absence of nearly ten minutes, he returned. "Madame de Maintenon," said he, in a whisper, "is but poorly to-day. However, she has eagerly consented to see you—follow me!"

So saying, the ecclesiastical courtier passed on, with myself at his heels. We came to the door of a second chamber, at which Fleuri *scraped* gently. We were admitted, and found therein three ladies, one of whom was reading, a second laughing, and a third yawning, and entering into another chamber, where, alone, and seated by the window, in a large chair, with one foot on a stool, in an attitude that rather reminded me of my mother, and which seems to me a favourite position with all devotees, we found an old woman without rouge, plainly dressed, with spectacles on her nose, and a large book on a little table before her. With a most profound salutation, Frejus approached, and taking me by the hand, said:

"Will Madame suffer me to present to her the Count Devereux?"

Madame de Maintenon, with an air of great meekness and humility, bowed a return to the salutation. "The son of Madame la Marechale de Devereux will always be most welcome to me!" Then, turning towards us, she

pointed to two stools, and, while we were seating ourselves said—

"And how did you leave my excellent friend?"

"When, Madam, I last saw my mother, which is now nearly a year ago, she was in health, and consoling herself for the advance of years by that tendency to wean the thoughts from this world, which (in her own language) is the divinest comfort of old age!"

"Admirable woman!" said Madame de Maintenon, casting down her eyes; "such are, indeed, the sentiments in which I recognise the Marechale. And how does her beauty wear? Those golden locks, and blue eyes, and that snowy skin, are not yet, I suppose, wholly changed for an adequate compensation of the beauties within!"

"Time, Madame, has been gentle with her; and I have often thought, though never, perhaps, more strongly than at this moment, that there is in those divine studies, which bring calm and light to the mind, something which preserves and embalms, as it were, the beauty of the body."

A faint blush passed over the face of the devotee. No, no—not even at eighty years of age is a compliment to a woman's beauty misplaced! There was a slight pause. I thought that respect forbade me to break it.

"His majesty," said Fréjus, in the tone of one who is sensible that he encroaches a little, and does it with consequent reverence—"his majesty, I hope, is well."

"God be thanked, yes, as well as we can expect. It is now nearly the hour in which his majesty awaits your personal inquiries."

Fleuri bowed as he answered—

"The king, then, will receive us to-day? My young companion is very desirous to see the greatest monarch, and consequently the greatest man of the age."

"The desire is natural," said Madame de Maintenon; and, then turning to me, she asked if I had yet seen king James III.

I took care, in my answer, to express that even if I had resolved to make that stay in Paris which allowed me to pay my respects to him at all, I should have deemed that both duty and inclination led me, in the first instance, to offer my homage to one who was both the benefactor of my father, and the monarch whose realms afforded me protection.

"You have not, then, said Madame de Maintenon, "decided on the length of your stay in France?"

"No," said I—and my answer was regulated by my desire to see how far I might rely on the services of one who expressed herself so warm a friend of that excellent woman, Madame la Marechale—"No, Madame. France is the country of my birth, if England is that of my parentage; and could I hope for some portion of that royal favour which my father enjoyed, I would rather claim it as the home of my hopes than the refuge of my exile. But"—and I stopped short purposely.

The old lady looked at me very earnestly through her spectacles for one moment, and then, hemming twice with a little embarrassment, again remarked to Frejus, that the time for seeing the king was nearly arrived. Frejus, whose policy at that period was very like that of the concealed queen, and who was, besides, far from desirous of introducing any new claimants on Madame de Maintenon's official favour, though he might not object to introduce them to her private friendship, was not slow in taking the hint. He rose, and I was forced to follow his example.

Madame de Maintenon thought she might safely indulge in a little cordiality when I was just on the point of leaving her, and accordingly blessed me, and gave me her hand, which I kissed very devoutly. An extremely pretty hand it was, too, notwithstanding the good queen's age. We then retired, and repassing the three ladies, who were now all yawning, repaired to the king's apartments.

"What think you of Madame?" said Frejus.

"What can I think of her," said I, cautiously, "but that greatness seems in her to take its noblest form—that of simplicity?"

"True," rejoined Frejus, "never was there so meek a mind joined with so lowly a carriage! Do you remark any trace of former beauty?"

"Yes, indeed, there is much that is soft in her countenance, and much that is still regular in her features; but what struck me most was the pensive and even sad tranquillity that rests upon her face when she is silent."

"The expression betrays the mind," answered Fleuri; and the curse of the great is ennui."

"Of the great in station," said I, "but not necessarily of the great in mind. I have heard that the Bishop of Frejus, notwithstanding his rank and celebrity, employs every hour to the advantage of others, and consequently without tedium to himself."

"Aha!" said Fleuri, smiling gently, and patting my cheek; "see now, if the air of palaces is not absolutely prolific of pretty speeches." And, before I could answer, we were in the apartments of the king.

Leaving me awhile to cool my heels in a gallery, filled with the butterflies who bask in the royal sunshine, Fréjus then disappeared among the crowd; and he was scarcely gone when I was agreeably surprised by seeing Count Hamilton approach towards me.

"*Mort diable!*" said he, shaking me by the hand, *à l'Anglaise;* "I am really delighted to see any one here who does not insult my sins with his superior excellence. Eh, now, look round this apartment for a moment! Whether would you believe yourself at the court of a great king, or the levée of a Roman cardinal? Whom see you chiefly? Gallant soldiers, with worn brows and glittering weeds; wise statesmen, with ruin to Austria and defiance to Rome in every wrinkle; gay nobles in costly robes, and with the bearing that so nicely teaches mirth to be dignified and dignity to be merry? No! cassock and hat, rosary and gown, decking sly, demure, hypocritical faces, flit, and stalk, and sadden round us. It seems to me," continued the witty Count, in a lower whisper, "as if the old king, having fairly buried his glory at Ramilies and Blenheim, had summoned all these good gentry to sing psalms over it! But are you waiting for a private audience?"

"Yes, under the auspices of the Bishop of Fréjus."

"You might have chosen a better guide—the king has been too much teased about him," rejoined Hamilton; "and now that we are talking of him, I will show you a singular instance of what good manners can do at court, in preference to good abilities. You observe yon quiet, modest-looking man, with a sensible countenance, and a clerical garb; you observe how he edges away when any one approaches to accost him; and how, from his extreme disesteem of himself, he seems to inspire every one with the same sentiment. Well, that man is a namesake of Fleuri's, the prior of *Argenteuil;* he has come here, I suppose, for some particular and temporary purpose, since, in reality, he has left the court. Well, that worthy priest—do remark his bow; did you ever see any thing so awkward?—is one of the most learned divines that the church can boast of? he is as immeasurably superior to the smooth-faced Bishop of Fréjus as Louis the Fourteenth is to my old friend Charles the Second. He has had equal

opportunities with the said bishop; been preceptor to the princes of Conti, and the Count de Vermandois: and yet, I will wager that he lives and dies a tutor—a book-worm—and a prior; while t'other Fleuri, without a particle of merit, but of the most superficial order, governs already kings through their mistresses, kingdoms through the kings, and may, for aught I know, expand into a prime minister, and ripen into a cardinal."

"Nay," said I, smiling, "there is little chance of so exalted a lot for the worthy bishop."

"Pardon me," interrupted Hamilton, "I am an old courtier, and look steadily on the game I no longer play. Suppleness, united with art, may do any thing in a court like this; and the smooth and elevated craft of a Fleuri may win even to the same height as the deep wiles of the glittering Mazarin, or the superb genius of the imperious Richelieu."

"Hist!" said I, "the bishop has reappeared. Who is that old priest, with a fine countenance, and an address that will, at least, please you better than that of the prior of *Argenteuil*, who has just stopped our episcopal courtier?"

"What! do you not know? It is the most celebrated preacher of the day—the great Massillon. It is said that that handsome person goes a great way towards winning converts among the *dames de la cour;* it is certain, at least, that when Massillon first entered the profession, he was to the soul something like the spear of Achilles to the body; and though very efficacious in healing the wounds of conscience, was equally ready, in the first instance, to inflict them."

"Ah," said I, "see the malice of wit; and see, above all, how much more ready one is to mention a man's frailties than to enlarge upon his virtues."

"To be sure," answered Hamilton, coolly, and patting his snuff-box—"to be sure, we old people like history better than fiction; and frailty is certain, while virtue is always doubtful."

"Don't judge of all people," said I, "by your experience among the courtiers of Charles the Second."

"Right," said Hamilton. "Providence never assembled so many rascals together before, without hanging them. And he would, indeed, be a bad judge of human nature who estimated the characters of men in general by the heroes of Newgate and the victims of Tyburn. But your bishop approaches. Adieu!"

"What!" said Fleuri, joining me and saluting Hamilton, who had just turned to depart, "what, Count Antoine! Does any thing but whim bring you here to-day?"

"No," answered Hamilton; "I am only here for the same purpose as the poor go to the temples of Caitan—to *inhale the steam of those good things which I see the priests devour.*"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the good-natured bishop, not in the least disconcerted: and Count Hamilton, congratulating himself on his *bon mot*, turned away.

"I have spoken to his Most Christian Majesty," said the bishop: "he is willing, as he before ordained, to admit you to his presence. The Duc de Maine is with the king, as also some other members of the royal family; but you will consider this a private audience."

I expressed my gratitude—we moved on—the doors of an apartment were thrown open—and I saw myself in the presence of Louis XIV.

The room was partially darkened. In the centre of it, on a large sofa, reclined the king; he was dressed (though this I rather remembered than noted) in a coat of black velvet, slightly embroidered; his vest was of white satin; he wore no jewels nor orders, for it was only on grand or gala days that he displayed personal pomp. At some little distance from him stood three members of the royal family—them I never regarded—all my attention was bent upon the king. My temperament is not that on which greatness, or indeed any external circumstances make much impression, but, as following, at a little distance, the Bishop of Fréjus, I approached the royal person, I must confess that Bolingbroke had scarcely need to have cautioned me not to appear too self-possessed. Perhaps, had I seen that great monarch in his *beaux jours*—in the plenitude of his power—his glory—the dazzling and meridian splendour of his person—his court—and his renown, pride might have made me more on my guard against too great, or at least, too apparent an impression; but the many reverses of that magnificent sovereign—reverses in which he had shown himself more great than in all his previous triumphs and earlier successes; his age—his infirmities—the very clouds round the setting sun—the very howls of joy at the expiring lion—all were calculated, in my mind, to deepen respect into reverence, and tincture reverence itself with awe. I saw before me not only the majesty of Louis-le Grand, but that of misfortune, of weakness, of infirmity, and

of age; and I forgot at once in that reflection, what otherwise would have blunted my sentiments of deference, viz. the crimes of his ministers, and the exactions of his reign! Endeavouring to collect my mind from an embarrassment which surprised myself, I lifted my eyes towards the king and saw a countenance where the trace of the superb beauty for which his manhood had been celebrated, still lingered, broken, not destroyed, and borrowing a dignity even more imposing from the marks of encroaching years, and from the evident exhaustion of suffering and disease.

Fleuri said, in a low tone, something which my ear did not catch. There was a pause, only a moment's pause; and then, in a voice, the beauty of which I had hitherto deemed exaggerated, the king spoke: and in that voice there was something so kind and encouraging, that I felt reassured at once. Perhaps its tone was not the less conciliating from the evident effect which the royal presence had produced upon me.

"You have given us, Count Devereux," said the king, "a pleasure which we are glad, in person, to acknowledge to you. And it has seemed to us fitting that the country in which your brave father acquired his fame should also be the asylum of his son."

"Sire," answered I, "Sire, it shall not be my fault if that country is not henceforth my own: and in inheriting my father's name, I inherit also his gratitude and his ambition."

"It is well said, Sir," said the king; and I once more raised my eyes, and perceived that his were bent upon me. "It is well said," he repeated, after a short pause; "and in granting to you this audience, we were not unwilling to hope that you were desirous to attach yourself to our court. The times do not require" (here I thought the old king's voice was not quite so firm as before) "the manifestation of your zeal in the same career as that in which your father gained laurels to France and to himself. But we will not neglect to give employment to your abilities, if not to your sword."

"That sword which was given to me, Sire," said I, "by your Majesty, shall be ever drawn (against all nations but one) at your command; and in being your Majesty's petitioner for future favours, I only seek some channel through which to evince my gratitude for the past."

"We do not doubt," said Louis, "that whatever *ingrats* we may make by testifying our good pleasure on your

behalf, you will not be among the number." The king here made a slight, but courteous inclination, and turned round. The observant Bishop of Fréjus, who had retired to a little distance, and who knew that the king never liked talking more than he could help it, gave me a signal. I obeyed, and backed with all due deference out of the royal presence.

So closed my interview with Louis XIV. Although his Majesty did not indulge in prolixity, I spoke of him for a long time afterward as the most eloquent of men. Believe me, there is no orator like a king; one word from a royal mouth stirs the heart more than Demosthenes could have done. There was a deep moral in that custom of the ancients, by which the Goddess of Persuasion was always represented *with a diadem on her head.*

CHAPTER VII.

Reflections—A Soirée—The Appearance of one important in the History—A Conversation with Madame de Balzac, highly satisfactory and cheering—A Rencontre with a curious old Soldier. The extinction of a once great Luminary.

I had now been several weeks at Paris; I had neither eagerly sought nor sedulously avoided its gayeties. It is not that one violent sorrow leaves us without power of enjoyment—it only lessens the power, and deadens the enjoyment; it does not take away from us the objects of life—it only forestalls the more indifferent calmness of age. The blood no longer flows in an irregular, but delicious course of vivid and wild emotion; the step no longer spurns the earth; nor does the ambition wander, insatiable, yet undefined, over the million paths of existence; but we lose not our old capacities—they are quieted, not extinct. The heart can never utterly and long be dormant; trifles may not charm it any more, nor levities delight; but it has an eye that is not closed, and a pulse that has not yet ceased to beat. We survey the scene that moves around, with a gaze no longer distracted by every hope that flutters by; and it is therefore that we find ourselves more calculated than before for the graver occupations of our race. The overflowing temperament is checked to its

proper level, the ambition bounded to its prudent and lawful goal. The earth is no longer so green, nor the heaven so blue, nor the fancy that stirs within us so rich in its creations; but we look more narrowly on the living crowd, and more rationally on the aims of men. The misfortune which has changed us, has only adapted us the better to a climate in which misfortune is a portion of the air. The grief that has thralled our spirit to a more narrow and dark cell, has also been a chain that has linked us to mankind with a force of which we dreamed not in the day of a wilder freedom and more luxuriant aspirings. In later life, a new spirit, partaking of that which was our earliest, returns to us. The solitude which delighted us in youth, but which, when the thoughts that make solitude a fairy land are darkened by affliction, becomes a fearful and sombre void, resumes its old spell as the more morbid and urgent memory of that affliction crumbles away by time. Content is a hermit; but so also is apathy. Youth loves the solitary couch, which it surrounds with dreams. Age, or experience (which is the mind's age) loves the same couch for the rest which it affords; but the wide interval between is that of exertion, of labour, and of labour among men. The wo which makes our *hearts* less social, often makes our *habits* more so. The thoughts, which in calm would have shunned the world, are *driven* upon it by the tempest, even as the birds which forsake the habitable land can, so long as the wind sleeps, and the thunder rests within its cloud, become the constant and solitary brooders over the waste sea; but the moment the storm awakes, and the blast pursues them, they fly, by an overpowering instinct, to some wandering bark, some vestige of human and social life: and exchange, even for danger from the hands of men, the desert of an angry Heaven, and the solitude of a storm.

I heard no more, either of Madame de Maintenon or the king. Meanwhile, my flight and friendship with Lord Bolingbroke, had given me a consequence in the eyes of the exiled prince, which I should not otherwise have enjoyed; and I was honoured by very flattering overtures to enter actively into his service. I have before said that I felt no enthusiasm in his cause, and I was far from feeling it for his person. My ambition rather directed its hopes towards a career in the service of France. France was the country of my birth, and the country of my father's fame. There no withering remembrances awaited me—

no private regrets were associated with its scenes—and no public penalties with its political institutions. And although I had not yet received any token of Louis's remembrance, it was still early, in the ordinary routine of court favours, to expect it; besides, his royal fidelity to his word was proverbial; and, sooner or later, I indulged the hope to profit by the sort of promise he had insinuated to me. I declined, therefore, with all due respect, the offers of the Chevalier, and continued to live the life of idleness and expectation, until Lord Bolingbroke returned to Paris, and accepted the office of secretary of state in the service of the Chevalier. As he has publicly declared his reasons in this step, I do not mean to favour the world with his private conversations on the same subject.

A day or two after his return, I went with him to a party given by a member of the royal family. The first person by whom we were accosted—and I rejoiced at it, for we could not have been accosted by a more amusing one—was Count Anthony Hamilton.

"Ah! my Lord Bolingbroke," said he, sauntering up to us; "how are you?—delighted to see you again—what a charming green is your coat—certainly no one dresses in better taste than you do—not even our friend, my brother Count here. Do look at Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans! Saw you ever such a creature? Where are you moving, my Lord? Ah! see him, Count, see him, gliding off to that pretty duchesse of course—well, he has a beautiful bow, it must be owned—why, you are not going too?—what would the world say if Count Anthony Hamilton were seen left to himself? No, no, come and sit down by Madame de Cornuel—she longs to be introduced to you, and is one of the wittiest women in Europe."

"*Volontiers!* provided she employs her wit ill-naturedly, and uses it in ridiculing other people, not praising herself."

"Oh! nobody can be more satirical; indeed, what difference is there between wit and satire? Come, Count!"

And Hamilton introduced me forthwith to Madame de Cornuel. She received me very politely; and turning to two or three people who formed the circle round her, said, with the greatest composure, "Messieurs, oblige me by seeking some other object of attraction; I wish to have a private conference with my new friend."

"I may stay," said Hamilton.

"Ah! certainly; you are never in the way."

"In that respect, *Madame*," said Hamilton, taking snuff,

and bowing very low—"In that respect I must strongly remind you of your excellent husband."

"Fie!" cried Madame de Cornuel; then turning to me, she said, "Ah! Monsieur, if you *could* have come to Paris some years ago you would have been enchanted with us—we are sadly changed. Imagine the fine old king, thinking it wicked not to hear plays, but to hear *players* act them, and so making the royal family a company of comedians. *Mon Dieu!* how villanously they perform; but do you know why I wished to be introduced to you?"

"Yes! in order to have a new listener; old listeners must be almost as tedious as old news."

"Very shrewdly said, and not far from the truth. The fact *is*, that I wanted to talk about all these fine people present, to some one for whose ear my anecdotes would have the charm of novelty. Let us begin with Louis Armond, Prince of Conti—you see him."

"What, that short-sighted, stout, and rather handsome man, with a cast of countenance somewhat like the pictures of *Henri Quatre*, who is laughing so merrily?"

"*O Ciel!* how droll! No, that handsome man is no less a person than the *Duc D'Orleans*. You see a little ugly thing, like an anatomized ape—there see—he has just thrown down a chair, and, in stooping to pick it up, has almost fallen over the Dutch Ambassadress—that is Louis Armond, Prince of Conti. Do you know what the Duc D'Orleans said to him the other day? '*Mon bon ami*,' he said, pointing to the prince's limbs,—(did you ever see such limbs out of a menagerie, by the by?)—'*Mon bon ami*, it is a fine thing for you that the Psalmist has assured us 'that the Lord delighteth not in any man's legs.' Nay, don't laugh, it 's quite true!"

It was now for Count Hamilton to take up the ball of satire; he was not a whit more merciful than the kind Madame de Cornuel. "The Prince," said he, "has so exquisite an awkwardness, that, whenever the king hears a noise, and inquires the cause, the invariable answer is, that 'the Prince of Conti has just tumbled down.' But, tell me, what do you think of Madame d'Aumont? She is in the English head-dress, and looks *triste à la mort*."

"She is rather pretty, to my taste."

"Yes," cried Madame de Cornuel, interrupting *le doux* Antoine—(it did one's heart good to see how strenuously each of them tried to talk more scandal than the other)—"yes, she is thought very pretty; but I think her very like

a *fricandeau*—white, soft, and insipid. She is always in tears," (added the good-natured Cornuel) "after her prayers, both at morning and evening. I asked why; and she answered, pretty simpleton, that she was always forced to pray to be made good, and she feared Heaven would take her at her word! However, she has many worshippers; and they call her the evening star."

"They should rather call her the Hyades!" said Hamilton, "if it be true that she sheds tears every morning and night, *and her rising and setting are thus always attended by rain.*"

"Bravo, Count Antoine! she shall be so called in future," said Madame de Cornuel. "But now, Monsieur Devereux, turn your eyes to that hideous old woman."

"What! the Duchesse d'Orleans?"

"The same. She is in full dress to-night; but in the daytime you generally see her in a riding-habit and a man's wig; she is—"

"Hist!" interrupted Hamilton; "do you not tremble to think what she would do if she overheard you; she is such a terrible creature at fighting! You have no conception, Count, what an arm she has. She knows her ugliness, and laughs at it, as all the rest of the world does. The king took her hand one day, and said, smiling, 'What could Nature have meant when she gave this hand to a German princess instead of a Dutch peasant?' 'Sire,' said the Duchesse, very gravely, 'Nature gave this hand to a German princess for the purpose of boxing the ears of her *dames d'atour!*'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Madame de Cornuel, laughing; "one is never at a loss for jokes upon a woman who eats *salad au lard*, and declares, that, whenever she is unhappy, her only consolation is ham and sausages! Her son treats her with the greatest respect, and consults her in all his amours, for which she professes the greatest horror, and which she retails to her correspondents all over the world, in letters as long as her pedigree. But you are looking *at* her son; is he not of a good mien?"

"Yes, pretty well; but does not exhibit to advantage by the side of Lord Bolingbroke, with whom he is now talking. Pray, who is the third personage that has just joined them?"

"Oh the wretch! it is the Abbe Dubois; a living proof of the folly of the French proverb, which says, that Mercuries should be made *du marbre*, and not *du bois*. Never

was there a Mercury equal to the Abbe—but, do look at that old man to the left—he is one of the most remarkable persons of the age."

"What! he with the small features, and comely countenance considering his years?"

"The same," said Hamilton; "it is the notorious Choisi. You know that he is the modern Tiresias, and has been a woman as well as man."

"How do you mean?"

"Ah, you may well ask!" cried Madame de Cornuel. "Why, he lived for many years in the disguise of a woman, and had all sorts of curious adventures."

"*Mort Diable!*" cried Hamilton; "it was entering your ranks, Madame, as a spy. I hear he makes but a sorry report of what he saw there."

"Come, Count Antoine," cried the lively De Cornuel, "we must not turn our weapons against each other; and when you attack a woman's sex, you attack her individually. But what makes you look so intently, *mon petit* Devereux, at that ugly priest?"

The person thus flatteringly designated, was Montreuil; he had just caught my eye, among a groupe of men who were conversing eagerly.

"Hush, Madame!" said I, "spare me for a moment;" and I rose, and mingled with the Abbé's companions "So, you have only arrived to-day," I heard one of them say to him.

"No, I could not despatch my business before."

"And how are matters in England?"

"Ripe!—if the life of his majesty (of France) be spared a year longer, we will send the Elector of Hanover back to his principality."

"Hist!" said the companion, and looked towards me. Montreuil ceased abruptly—our eyes met—his fell. I affected to look among the groupe as if I had expected to find there some one I knew, and then, turning away, I seated myself alone and apart. There, unobserved, I kept my looks on Montreuil. I remarked that, from time to time, his keen dark eye glanced towards me, with a look rather expressive of vigilance than any thing else. Soon afterward his little knot dispersed; I saw him converse for a few moments with Dubois, who received him, I thought, distantly; and then he was engaged in a long conference with the Bishop of Fréjus, whom, till then, I had not perceived among the crowd.

As I was loitering on the *escalier*, where I saw Montreuil depart with the bishop, in the carriage of the latter, Hamilton, accosting me, insisted on my accompanying him to Chaulieu's, where a late supper awaited the sons of wine and wit. However, to the good count's great astonishment, I preferred solitude and reflection, for that night, to any thing else.

Montreuil's visit to the French capital boded me no good. He possessed great influence with Fleuri, and was in high esteem with Madame de Maintenon, and, in effect, very shortly after his return to Paris, the Bishop of Fréjus looked upon me with a most cool sort of benignancy; and Madame de Maintenon told her friend, the Duchesse de St. Simon, that it was a great pity a young nobleman, of my birth and prepossessing appearance—(ay! my prepossessing appearance would never have occurred to the devotee, if I had not seemed so sensible of her own)—should not only be addicted to the wildest dissipation, but, worst still, to Jansenistical tenets. After this, there was no hope for me, save in the king's word, which his increasing infirmities, naturally engrossing his attention, prevented my hoping too sanguinely, would dwell very acutely on his remembrance. I believe, however, so religiously scrupulous was Louis upon a point of honour, that, had he lived, I should have had nothing to complain of. As it was—but I anticipate!—Montreuil disappeared from Paris, almost as suddenly as he had appeared there. And as drowning men catch at a straw, so, finding my affairs in a very low ebb, I thought I would take advice, even from Madame de Balzac.

I accordingly repaired to her hotel. She was at home, and, fortunately, alone.

"You are welcome, *mon fils*," said she, "suffer me to give you that title—you are welcome—it is some days since I saw you."

"I have numbered them, I assure you, Madame," said I, "and they have crept with a dull pace; but you know that business has claims as well as pleasure!"

"True!" said Madame de Balzac, pompously; "I myself find the weight of politics a little insupportable, though so used to it; to your young brain I can readily imagine how irksome it must be!"

"Would, Madame, that I could obtain your experience by contagion; as it is, I fear that I have profited little by my visit to his Majesty. Madame de Maintenon will not

see me, and the Bishop of Fréjus (excellent man!) has been seized with a sudden paralysis of memory, whenever I present myself in his way."

"That party will never do—I thought not," said Madame de Balzac, who was a wonderful imitator of the fly on the wheel; "*my* celebrity, and the knowledge that *I* loved you for your father's sake, were, I fear, sufficient to destroy your interest with the Jesuits and their tools. Well, well, we must repair the mischief we have occasioned you. What place would suit you best?"

"Why, any thing diplomatic. I would rather travel at my age, than remain in luxury and indolence even at Paris!"

"Ah, nothing like diplomacy!" said Madame de Balzac, with the air of a Richelieu, and emptying her snuff-box at a pinch; "but have you, my son, the requisite qualities for that science, as well as the tastes? Are you capable of intrigue? Can you say one thing and mean another? Are you aware of the immense consequence of a look or a bow? Can you live like a spider, in the centre of an inexplicable net—inexplicable as well as dangerous—to all but the weaver? That, my son, is the art of politics—that is to be a diplomatist?"

"Perhaps, to one less penetrating than Madame de Balzac," answered I, "I might, upon trial, not appear utterly ignorant of the noble art of state duplicity which she has so eloquently depicted."

"Possibly!" said the good lady; "it must indeed be a profound dissimulator to deceive *me*."

"But what would you advise me to do in the present crisis? What party to adopt—what individual to flatter?"

Nothing, I already discovered, and have already observed, did the inestimable Madame de Balzac dislike more than a downright question—she never answered it.

"Why, really," said she, preparing herself for a long speech, "I am quite glad you consult me, and I will give you the best advice in my power. *Ecoutez, donc*—you have seen the Duc de Maine?"

"Certainly!"

"Hum! ha! it would be wise to follow him; but—you take me—you understand. Then, you know, my son, there is the Duc d'Orleans—fond of pleasure—full of talent—but you know—there is a little—what do you call it—you understand. As for the Duc de Bourbon—'tis quite a simpleton—nevertheless we must consider—nothing

like consideration—believe me, no diplomatist ever hurries. As for Madame de Maintenon—you know, and I know too, that the Duchesse d'Orleans calls her an old hag—but then—a word to the wise—Eh!—what shall we say to Madame the Duchesse herself—what a fat woman she is—but excessively clever—such a letter-writer.—Well—you see, my dear young friend, that it is a very difficult matter to decide upon—but you must already be fully aware what plan I should advise."

"Already, Madame!"

"To be sure! What have I been saying to you all this time?—did you not hear me?—Shall I repeat my advice?"

"Oh, no! I perfectly comprehend you now; you would advise me—in short—to—to—do as well as I can."

"You have said it, my son. I thought you would understand me, on a little reflection."

"To be sure—to be sure," said I.

And three ladies being announced, my conference with Madame de Balzac ended.

I now resolved to wait a little till the tides of power seemed somewhat more settled, and I could ascertain in what quarter to point my bark of enterprise. I gave myself rather more eagerly to society, in proportion as my political schemes were suffered to remain torpid. My mind could not remain quiet without preying on itself; and no evil appeared to me so great as tranquillity. Thus the spring and earlier summer passed on, till, in August, the riots preceding the rebellion broke out in Scotland. At this time I saw but little of Lord Bolingbroke in private; though, with his characteristic affectation, he took care that the load of business, with which he was really oppressed, should not prevent his enjoyment of all gayeties in public. And my indifference to the cause of the Chevalier, in which he was so warmly engaged, threw a natural restraint upon our conversation, and produced an involuntary coldness in our intercourse—so impossible is it for men to be private friends who differ on a public matter.

One evening I was engaged to meet a large party, at a country house about forty miles from Paris. I went and stayed some days. My horses had accompanied me; and when I left the château, I resolved to make the journey to Paris *à cheval*. Accordingly, I ordered my carriage to follow me, and, attended by a single groom, commenced my expedition. It was a beautiful still morning—the first day

of the first month of autumn. I had proceeded about ten miles, when I fell in with an old French officer. I remember—though I never saw him but that once—I remember his face as if I had encountered it yesterday. It was thin and long, and yellow enough to have served as a caricature rather than a portrait, of Don Quixote. He had a hook nose, and a long sharp chin; and all the lines, wrinkles, curves, and furrows, of which the human visage is capable, seemed to have met in his cheeks. Nevertheless his eye was bright and keen—his look alert—and his whole bearing firm, gallant, and soldier-like. He was attired in a sort of a military undress—wore a mustachio, which, though thin and gray, was carefully curled; and at the summit of a very respectable wig was perched a small cocked hat, adorned with a black feather. He rode very upright in his saddle; and his horse, a steady stalwart quadruped, of the Norman breed, with a terribly long tail, and a prodigious breadth of chest, put one stately leg before another in a kind of trot, which, though it seemed, from its height of action, and the proud look of the steed, a pretension to motion more than ordinarily brisk, was *à la vérité*, a little slower than a common walk.

This noble cavalier seemed sufficiently an object of curiosity to my horse, to induce the animal to testify his surprise by shying, very jealously and very vehemently, in passing him. This ill-breeding on his part was indignantly returned on the part of the Norman charger, who, muttering a sort of squeak, and shaking his long mane and head, commenced a series of curvets and capers, which caused the old Frenchman no little trouble to appease. In the midst of these equine freaks, the horse came so near me as to splash my nether garment with a liberality as little ornamental as it was pleasurable.

The old Frenchman seeing this, took off his cocked hat very politely, and apologized for the accident. I replied with equal courtesy; and, as our horses slid into quiet, their riders slid into conversation. It was begun and chiefly sustained by my new comrade; for I am little addicted to commence unnecessary socialities myself, though I should think very meanly of my pretensions to the name of a gentleman and a courtier if I did not return them when offered, even by a beggar.

"It is a fine horse of yours, Monsieur," said the old Frenchman; "but I cannot believe—pardon me for saying so—that your slight English steeds are so well adapted

to the purposes of war as our strong chargers—*vous le mien, par exemple.*"

"It is very possible, Monsieur," said I. "Has the horse you now ride done service in the field as well as on the road?"

"Ah! *le pauvre petit mignon*—no!"—(*petit*, indeed—this little darling was seventeen hands high at the very least)—"no, Monsieur; it is but a young creature this—his grandfather served me well!"

"I need not ask you, Monsieur, if you have borne arms—the soldier is stamped upon you!"

"Sir, you flatter me highly!" said the old gentleman, blushing to the very tip of his long, thin ears, and bowing as low as if I had called him a *Condé;* "I have followed the profession of arms for more than fifty years."

"Fifty years—'tis a long time!"

"A long time," rejoined my companion, bowing again at my profound truism—"a long time to look back upon with regret."

"Regret! by Heaven—I should think the remembrance of fifty years' excitement and glory would be a remembrance of triumph."

The old man turned around on his saddle, and looked at me some moments very wistfully—"You are young, Sir," said he, "and at your years I should have thought with you—but—" (then abruptly changing his voice, he continued)—"Triumph, did you say? Sir, I have had three sons; they are dead—they died in battle—I did not weep—I did not shed a tear, Sir—not a tear! But I will tell you when I did weep. I came back an old man to the home I had left as a young one. I saw the country a desert. I saw that the noblesse had become tyrants—the peasants had become slaves—such slaves—savage from despair—even when they were gay, most fearfully gay, from constitution. Sir, I saw the priest rack and grind, and the seigneur exact and pillage, and the tax-gatherer squeeze out the little the other oppressors had left: anger, discontent, wretchedness, famine, a terrible separation between one order of people and another—an incredible indifference to the miseries their despotism caused, on the part of the aristocracy—a sullen and vindictive hatred for the perpetration of those miseries on the part of the people—all places sold—even all honours priced at the court, which was become a public market—a province of peasants—of living men, bartered for a few livres, and literally passed from one hand

to another—to be squeezed and drained anew by each new possessor—in a word, Sir, an abandoned court, an unredeemed noblesse—unredeemed, Sir, by a single benefit which, in other countries, even the most feudal, the vassal obtains from the master—a peasantry famished—a nation loaded with debt, which it sought to pay by tears;—these are what I saw—these are the consequences of that heartless and miserable vanity, from which arose wars neither useful nor honourable—these are the real components of that *triumph*, as you term it, which you wonder that I regret."

Now, although it was impossible to live at the court of Louis XIV. in his latter days, and not feel, from the general discontent that prevailed even *there*, what a dark truth the old soldier's speech contained—yet I was somewhat surprised by an enthusiasm so little military in a person whose bearing and air were so conspicuously martial.

"You draw a melancholy picture," said I: "and the wretched state of culture in which the lands we now pass through exhibit, is a witness how little exaggeration there is in your colouring. However, these are but the ordinary evils of war, and if your country endures them, do not forget that she has also inflicted them. Remember what France did to Holland, and own that it is but a retribution that France should now find, that the injury we do to others is (among nations as well as individuals) injury to ourselves."

My old Frenchman curled his mustaches with the finger and thumb of his left hand: this was rather too subtle a distinction for him.

"That may be true enough, Monsieur," said he; "but, *morbleu*, those *maudits* Dutchmen deserved what they sustained at our hands. No, Sir, no—I am not so base as to forget the glory my country acquired, though I weep for her wounds."

"I do not quite understand you, Sir," said I; "did you not just now confess that the wars you had witnessed were neither honourable nor useful? What glory, then, was to be acquired in a war of that character, even though it was so delightfully animated by cutting the throats of 'those *maudits* Dutchmen?'"

"Sir," answered the Frenchman, drawing himself up, "you did *not* understand me. When we punished Holland, we did rightly. *We conquered!*"

"Whether you conquered or not, (for the good folk of

Holland are not so sure of the fact)" answered I, "that war was the most unjust in which your king was ever engaged; but, pray, tell me, Sir, what war it is that you lament?"

The Frenchman frowned—whistled—put out his under lip, in a sort of angry embarrassment—and then, spurring his great horse into a curvet, said,

"That last war with the English!"

"Faith," said I, "that was the justest of all."

"Just," cried the Frenchman, halting abruptly, and darting at me a glance of fire, "just!—no more, Sir! no more! I was at Blenheim, and at Ramilies!"

As the old warrior said the last words, his voice faltered; and though I could not help inly smiling at the confusion of ideas, by which wars were just or unjust, according as they were fortunate or not, yet I respected his feelings enough to turn away my face, and remain silent.

"Yes," renewed my comrade, colouring with evident shame, and drawing his cocked hat over his brows, "yes, I received my last wound at Ramilies. *Then* my eyes were opened to the horrors of war; *then* I saw and cursed the evils of ambition; *then* I resolved to retire from the armies of a king who had lost for ever his name, his glory, and his country!"

Was there ever a better type of the French nation than this old soldier? As long as fortune smiles on them, it is "*Marchons au diable!*" and "*Vive la gloire!*" Directly they get beat, it is "*Ma pauvre patrie!*" and "*Les calamities affreuses de la guerre!*"

"However," said I, "the old king is drawing near the end of his days, and is said to express his repentance at the evils his ambition has occasioned."

The old soldier shoved back his hat, and offered me his snuff-box. I judged by this that he was a little mollified.

"Ah!" he renewed, after a pause, "Ah! times are sadly changed, since the year 1667; when the young king—he was young then—took the field, in Flanders, under the great Turenne. *Sacristie!* What a hero he looked, upon his white war-horse! I would have gone—ay, and the meanest and backwardest soldier in the camp would have gone—into the very mouth of the cannon, for a look from that magnificent countenance, or a word from that mouth which knew so well what words were! Sir, there was in the war of seventy-two, when we were at peace with

Great Britain, an English gentleman, then in the army, afterward a marshal of France: I remember, as if it were yesterday, how gallantly he behaved. The king sent to compliment him, after some signal proof of courage and conduct, and asked what reward he would have. 'Sire,' answered the Englishman, 'give me the white plume you wore this day.' From that moment the Englishman's fortune was made."

"The flattery went farther than the valour," said I, smiling, as I recognised in the anecdote the first great step which my father had made in the ascent of fortune.

"*Sacristie!*" cried the Frenchman, "it was no flattery, then. We so idolized the king, that mere truth would have seemed disloyalty; and we no more thought that praise, however extravagant, was adulation, when directed to him, than we should have thought there was adulation in the praise we would have given to our first mistress But it is all changed now! Who now cares for the old priest-ridden monarch?"

And upon this the veteran, having conquered the momentary enthusiasm which the remembrance of the king's earlier glories had excited, transferred all his genius of description to the opposite side of the question, and declaimed, with great energy, upon the royal vices and errors, which were so charming in prosperity, and were now so detestable in adversity.

While we were thus conversing, we approached Versailles. We thought the vicinity of the town seemed unusually deserted. We entered the main street—crowds were assembled—a universal murmur was heard—excitement sat on every countenance. Here an old crone was endeavouring to explain something, evidently beyond his comprehension, to a child of three years old; who, with open mouth and fixed eyes, seemed to make up in wonder for the want of intelligence; there, a groupe of old disbanded soldiers occupied the way, and seemed, from their muttered conversations, to vent a sneer and a jest at a priest, who, with downward countenance and melancholy air, was hurrying along.

One young fellow was calling out—"At least, it is a holyday, and I shall go to Paris!"—and, as a contrast to him, an old withered artisan, leaning on a gold-headed cane, with sharp avarice eloquent in every line of his face, muttered out to a fellow-miser—"No business to-day—no

money, John—no money!" One knot of women, of all ages, close by which my horse passed, was entirely occupied with a single topic, and that so vehemently, that I heard the leading words of the discussion. "Mourning—becoming—what fashion?—how long?—O ciel!" Thus do follies weave themselves round the bier of death!

"What is the news, gentlemen?" said I.

"News—what, you have not heard it!—The king is dead!"

"Louis dead—Louis the Great dead!" cried my companion.

"Louis the Great?" said a sullen-looking man—"Louis the persecutor!"

"Ah—he's a Huguenot!" cried another, with haggard cheeks and hollow eyes, scowling at the last speaker. "Never mind what he says—the king was right when he refused protection to the Heretics—but was he right when he levied such taxes on the Catholics?"

"Hush!" said a third—"hush—it may be unsafe to speak—there are spies about: for my part, I think it was all the fault of the Noblesse."

"And the favourites!" cried a soldier, fiercely.

"And the harlots!" cried a hag of eighty.

"And the priests!" muttered the Huguenot.

"And the tax-gatherers," added the lean Catholic.

We rode slowly on. My comrade was evidently and powerfully affected.

"So, he is dead!" said he. "Dead!—well—well—peace be with him. He conquered in Holland—he humbled Genoa—he dictated to Spain—he commanded Condé and Turenne—he—Bah! What is all this?" (then, turning abruptly to me, my companion cried)—

"I did not speak against the king, did I, Sir?"

"Not much."

"I am glad of that—yes, very glad!" And the old man glared fiercely round on a troop of boys, who were audibly abusing the dead lion. "I would have bit out my tongue, rather than it had joined in the base joy of these yelping curs. Heavens! when I think what shouts I have heard—when the name of that man, then deemed little less than a God, was but breathed!—and now—why do you look at me, Sir? My eyes are moist—I know it, Sir—I know it The old battered, broken soldier, who made his first campaigns, when that which is now dust was the idol of France, and the pupil of Turenne—the old sol-

dier's eyes shall not be dry, though there is not another tear shed in the whole of this great empire."

"Your three sons?" said I; "you did not weep for them?"

"No, Sir—I loved them when I was old; but I loved Louis *when I was young!*"

"Your oppressed and pillaged country?" said I—"think of that."

"No, Sir, I will not think of it!" cried the old warrior, in a passion. "I will not think of it—to-day, at least."

"You are right, my brave friend; in the grave let us bury even public wrongs—but let us not bury their remembrance. May the joy we read in every face that we pass—joy at the death of one whom idolatry once almost seemed to deem immortal—be a lesson to future kings!"

My comrade did not immediately answer; but, after a pause, and we had turned our backs upon the town, he siad—

"Joy, Sir—you spoke of joy! Yes, we are Frenchmen—we forgive our rulers easily for private vices and petty faults: but we never forgive them, if they commit the greatest of faults, and suffer a stain to rest upon—"

"What?" I asked, as my comrade broke off.

"The national glory, Monsieur!" said he.

"You have hit it," said I, smiling at the turgid sentiment which was so really and deeply felt. "And had you written folios upon the character of your countrymen, you could not have expressed it better."

CHAPTER VIII.

In which there is reason to fear that Princes are not invariably free from Human Peccadilloes.

On entering Paris, my veteran fellow-traveller took leave of me, and I proceeded to my hotel. When the first excitation of my thoughts was a little subsided, and after some feelings of a more public nature, I began to consider what influence the king's death was likely to have on my fortunes, I could not but see, at a glance, that for the cause of the Chevalier, and the destiny of his present ex-

ertions in Scotland, it was the most fatal event that could have occurred.

The balance of power, in the contending factions of France, would, I foresaw, lie entirely between the Duke of Orleans and the legitimate children of the late king; the latter, closely leagued as they were with Madame de Maintenon, would not be much disposed to consider the welfare of the *bon* Comte Devereux, and my wishes, therefore, naturally settled on the former. I was not doomed to a long suspense. Every one knows, that the very next day the Duke of Orleans appeared before Parliament, and was proclaimed regent—that the will of the late king was set aside—and that the Duke of Maine became *tout-à-coup* as low in power as he had always been despicable in intellect. A little hubbub ensued—people in general laughed at the regent's finesse—and the more sagacious admired the courage and address of which the finesse was composed. The regent's mother wrote a letter of sixty-nine pages about it; and the Dutchess of Maine boxed the duke's ears very heartily for not being as clever as herself. All Paris teemed with joyous forebodings; and the regent, whom every one, some time ago, had suspected of poisoning his cousins, every one now declared to be the most perfect prince that could possibly be imagined, and the very picture of *Henri Quatre*, in goodness as well as phisiognomy. Three days after this event, one happened to myself, with which my public career may be said to commence.

I had spent the evening at a house in a distant part of Paris, and, invited by the beauty of the night, had dismissed my carriage, and was walking home alone and on foot. Occupied with my reflections, and not very well acquainted with the dangerous and dark streets of Paris, in which it was very rare for those who have carriages to wander on foot, I insensibly strayed from my appropriate direction. When I first discovered this disagreeable fact, I was in a filthy and obscure lane rather than street, which I did not remember having ever honoured with my presence before. While I was pausing in the vain hope and anxious endeavour to shape out some imaginary chart—some "map of the mind," by which to direct my bewildered course, I heard a confused noise proceed from another lane at right angles with the one in which I then was I listened—the sound became more distinct—I recognised human voices in loud and angry altercation—a moment

more, and there was a scream. Though I did not attach much importance to the circumstance, I thought I might as well approach nearer to the quarter of noise. I walked to the door of the house from which the scream proceeded; it was very small, and mean. Just as I neared it a window was thrown open, and a voice cried—"Help! help! for God's sake, help!"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Whoever you are, save us!" cried the voice, "and that instantly, or we shall be murdered:" and, the moment after, the voice ceased abruptly, and was succeeded by the clashing of swords.

I beat loudly at the door—I shouted out—no answer; the scuffle within seemed to increase; I saw a small blind alley to the left; one of the unfortunate women, to whom such places are homes, was standing in it. "What possibility is there of entering the house?" I asked.

"Oh!" said she, "it does not matter; it is not the first time gentlemen have cut each other's throats *there*."

"What! is it a house of bad repute?"

"Yes; and where there are bullies who wear knives, and take purses—as well as ladies, who—"

"Good Heavens!" cried I, interrupting her, "there is no time to be lost. Is there no other way of entrance but at this door?"

"Yes, if you are bold enough to enter at another!"

"Where?"

"Down this alley."

Immediately I entered the alley—the woman pointed to a small, dark, narrow flight of stairs—I ascended—the sounds increased in loudness. I mounted to the second flight—a light streamed from a door—the clashing of swords was distinctly audible within—I broke open the door, and saw myself a witness and intruder in a scene at once ludicrous and fearful.

A table covered with bottles, and the remnants of a meal, was in the centre of the room; several articles of women's dress were scattered over the floor; two women of unequivocal description were clinging to a man richly dressed, and who, having fortunately got behind an immense chair, that had been overthrown, probably, in the scuffle, managed to keep off, with awkward address, a fierce-looking fellow, who had less scope for the ability of his sword arm, from the circumstance of his attempting to pull away the chair with his left hand. Whenever he stooped to effect this ob-

ject, his antagonist thrust at him very vigorously, and had it not been for the embarrassment his female enemies occasioned him, the latter would, in all probability, have despatched or disabled his besieger. This fortified gentleman being backed by the window, was, I immediately concluded, the person who had called to me for assistance.

At the other corner of the apartment was another cavalier, who used his sword with singular skill, but who, being hard pressed by two lusty fellows, was forced to employ that skill rather in defence than attack. Altogether, the disordered appearance of the room, the broken bottles, the fumes with which the hot atmosphere teemed, the evident profligacy of the two women, the half *derobé* guise of the cavaliers, and the ruffian air, and collected ferocity of the assailants, plainly denoted that it was one of those perilous festivals of pleasure in which imprudent gallants were often, in that day, betrayed by treacherous Delilahs into the hands of Philistines, who, not contented with stripping them for the sake of plunder, frequently murdered them for the sake of secrecy.

Having taken a rapid, but satisfactory, survey of the scene, I did not think it necessary to make any preparatory parley. I threw myself upon the nearest bravo with so hearty a good will, that I ran him through the body before he had recovered his surprise at my appearance. This somewhat startled the other two; they drew back, and demanded quarter.

"Quarter, indeed!" cried the farther cavalier, releasing himself from his astonished female assailants, and leaping nimbly over his bulwark, into the centre of the room—"quarter, indeed, rascally *ivrognes!* No; it is our turn now; and, by Joseph of Arimathea! you shall sup with Pilate to-night." So saying, he pressed his old assailant so fiercely, that, after a short contest, the latter retreated till he had backed himself to the door, he then suddenly turned round, and vanished in a twinkling. The third and remaining ruffian was far from thinking himself a match for three men: he fell on his knees, and implored mercy. However, the *ci-devant* sustainer of the besieged chair was but little disposed to afford him the clemency he demanded, and approached the crest-fallen bravo with so grim an air of truculent delight, brandishing his sword, and uttering the most terrible threats, that there would have been small doubt of the final catastrophe of the trembling bully, had not the other gallant thrown himself in the way of his friend.

"Put up thy sword," said he, laughing, and yet with an air of command; "we must not court crime, and then punish it." Then, turning to the bully, he said, "Rise, Sir Rascal! the devil spares thee a little longer, and this gentleman will not disobey *his*, as well as *thy* master's wishes.—Begone!"

The fellow wanted no second invitation: he sprang to his legs, and to the door. The disappointed cavalier assisted his descent down the stairs with a kick, that would have done the work of the sword to any flesh not accustomed to such pedal applications. Putting up his rapier, the milder gentleman then turned to *the ladies*, who lay huddled together under shelter of the chair which their intended victim had deserted.

"Ah, Mesdames," said he, gravely, and with a low bow, "I am sorry for your disappointment. As long as you contented yourselves with robbery, it were a shame to have interfered with your innocent amusements; but cold steel becomes serious. Monsieur D'Argenson will favour you with some inquiries to-morrow; at present, I recommend you to empty what remains in the bottle. Adieu! Monsieur, to whom I am so greatly indebted, honour me with your arm down these stairs. You" (turning to his friend) "will follow us, and keep a sharp look behind. *Allons! Vive Henri Quatre!*"

As we descended the dark and rough stairs, my new companion said, "What an excellent antidote to the effects of the vin de champagne is this same fighting. I feel as if I had not tasted a drop these six hours. What fortune brought you hither, Monsieur?" addressing me.

We were now at the foot of the first flight of stairs, a high and small window admitted the moonlight, and we saw each other's faces clearly.

"That fortune," answered I, looking at my acquaintance steadily, but with an expression of profound respect —"that fortune which watches over kingdoms, and which, I trust, may in no place or circumstance be a deserter from your Highness."

"Highness!" said my companion, colouring, and darting a glance, first at his friend and then at me. "Hist—Sir, you know me, then—speak low—you know, then, for whom you have drawn your sword?"

"Yes, so please your Highness. I have drawn it this night for Philip of Orleans; I trust yet, in another scene, and for another cause, to draw it for the Regent of France!"

CHAPTER IX.

A Prince—an Audience—and a Secret Embassy.

The Regent remained silent for a moment: he then said, in an altered and grave voice, "*C'est bien, Monsieur!* I thank you for the distinction you have made. It were not amiss," (he added, turning to his comrade,) "that *you* would now and then deign, henceforward, to make the same distinction. But this is neither time nor place for parlance. On, gentlemen!"

I reoffered my arm to the prince; and I saw through his heart, when he, though with great courtesy, refused it. A man does not love you the better for discovering even his greatness when he wishes to hide it. However, it was not the love of the profligate, but a hold upon the prince, which I desired, and for which I had played my game.

We left the house, passed into the street, and moved on rapidly, and in silence, till the constitutional gayety of the duke, recovering its ordinary tone, he said, with a laugh—

"Well, now, it is a little hard that a man who has been toiling all day for the public good, should feel ashamed of indulging an hour or two at night in his private amusements; but so it is. 'Once grave, always grave!' is the maxim of the world—eh, Chatran?"

The companion bowed. "'T is a very good saying, please your royal highness, and is intended to warn us from the sin of *ever* being grave!"

"Ha ha! you have *un grand talent pour la morale, mon bon Chatran!*" cried the duke, "and would draw a rule for conduct out of the wickedest *bon mot* of Dubois. Monsieur, pardon me, but I have seen you before: you are the Count—"

"Devereux, Monseigneur."

"True, true! I have heard much of you: you are intimate with Milord Bolingbroke. Would that I had fifty friends like *him*."

"Monseigneur would have little trouble in his regency if his wish were realized," said Chatran.

"*Tant mieux*, so long as I had little odium as well as

little trouble—a happiness which, thanks to you and Dubois, I am not likely to enjoy—*Mais voilà la voiture!*"

And the duke pointed to a dark, plain carriage, which we had suddenly come upon.

"Count Devereux," said the merry regent, "you will enter; my duty requires that, at this seductive hour, I should see a young gentleman of your dangerous age safely lodged at his hotel!"

We entered, Chatran gave the orders, and we drove off rapidly.

The Regent hummed a tune, and his two companions listened to it in respectful silence.

"Well, well, Messieurs," said he, bursting out at last into open voice, "I will ever believe, in future, that the gods *do* look benignantly on us worshippers of the Alma Venus! Do you know much of Tibullus, Monsieur Devereux? And can you assist my memory with the continuation of the line—

> "Quisquis amore tenetur eat—'"
> ——————"'tutusque sacerque
> Qualibet: insidias non timuisse decet.'"

answered I.

"*Bon!*" cried the duke. "I love a gentleman from my very soul, when he can both fight well and read Latin! I hate a man who is merely a winebibber and blade drawer. By St. Louis, though it is an excellent thing to fill the stomach, especially with Tokay, yet there is no reason in the world why we should not fill the head too. But here we are. Adieu, Monsieur Devereux—we shall see you at the *palais*."

I expressed my thanks briefly at the Regent's condescension, descended from the carriage, (which instantly drove off with renewed celerity,) and once more entered my hotel.

Two or three days after my adventure with the Regent, I thought it expedient to favour that eccentric prince with a visit. During the early part of his regency, it is well known how successfully he combated with his natural indolence, and how devotedly his mornings were surrendered to the toils of his new office; but when pleasure has grown habit, it requires a stronger mind than that of Philippe le Debonnair to give it a permanent successor in business. Pleasure is, indeed, like the genius of the fable, the most useful of slaves while you subdue it; the most

intolerable of tyrants the moment your negligence suffers it to subdue you.

The hours in which the prince gave audience to the comrades of his lighter, rather than graver occupations, were those immediately before and after his levee. I thought that this would be the best season for me to present myself. Accordingly, one morning after the levee, I repaired to his palace.

The antechamber was already crowded. I sat myself quietly down in one corner of the room, and looked upon the motley groupes around. I smiled inly as they reminded me of the scenes my own anteroom, in my younger days of folly and fortune, was wont to exhibit; the same heterogeneous assemblage (only upon a grander scale) of the ministers to the physical appetites and the mental tastes. There was the fretting and impudent mountebank, side by side with the gentle and patient scholar—the harlot's envoy and the priest's messenger—the agent of the police, and the licensed breaker of its laws—there;—but what boots a more prolix description? What is the anteroom of a great man, who has many wants and many tastes, but a panorama of the blended disparities of this compounded world.

While I was moralizing, a gentleman suddenly thrust his head out of a door, and appeared to reconnoitre us. Instantly, the crowd swept up to him. I thought I might as well follow the general example, and pushing aside some of my fellow-loiterers, I presented myself and my name to the gentleman, with the most ingratiating air I could command.

The gentleman, who was tolerably civil for a great man's great man, promised that my visit should be immediately announced to the prince; and then, with the politest bow imaginable, slapped the door in my face. After I had waited about seven or eight minutes longer, the gentleman reappeared, singled me from the crowd, and desired me to follow him; I passed through another room, and was presently in the Regent's presence.

I was rather startled when I saw by the morning light, and in deshabille, the person of that royal martyr to dissipation. His countenance was red, but bloated, and a weakness in his eyes added considerably to the jaded and haggard expression of his features. A proportion of stomach rather inclined to corpulency, seemed to betray the taste for *gourmanderie*, which the most radically coarse, and

yet (strange to say) the most generally accomplished and really good-natured of royal profligates, combined with his other qualifications. He was yawning very elaborately over a great heap of papers, when I entered. He finished his yawn, (as if it were too brief and too precious a re creation to lose,) and then said, "Good morning, Monsieur Devereux; I am glad that you have found me out *at last.*"

"I was afraid, Monseigneur, of appearing an intruder on your presence, by offering my homage to you before."

"So like my good fortune," said the Regent, turning to a man seated at another table at some distance, whose wily, astute countenance, piercing eye, and licentious expression of lip and brow, indicated at once the ability and vice which composed his character. "So like my good fortune, is it not, Dubois? If ever I meet with a tolerably pleasant fellow, who does not disgrace me by his birth or reputation, he is always so terribly afraid of intruding! and whenever I pick up a respectable personage without wit, or a wit without respectability, he attaches himself to me like a burr, and can't live a day without inquiring after my health."

Dubois smiled, bowed, but did not answer, and I saw that his look was bent darkly and keenly upon me.

"Well," said the prince, "what think you of our opera, Count Devereux?—It beats your English one—eh!"

"Ah, certainly, Monseigneur; ours is but a reflection of yours."

"So says your friend, milord Bolingbroke, a person who knows about operas almost as much as I do, which, vanity apart, is saying a great deal. I should like very well to visit England—what should I learn best there? In Spain (I shall always love Spain,) I learned to cook."

"Monseigneur, I fear," answered I, smiling, 'could obtain but little additional knowledge in that art in our barbarous country. A few rude and imperfect inventions, have, indeed, of late years astonished the feeble cultivators of the science; but *une nuit épaisse*, rests still upon its main principles and leading truths. Perhaps, what Monseigneur would find best worth studying in England would be—*les dames.*

"Ah! *les dames* all over the world!" cried the Duke, laughing; "but I hear your *belles Anglaises* are sentimental, and love *à l'Arcadienne.*"

"It is true at present: but who shall say how far Mon-

seigneur's example might enlighten them in a train of thought so erroneous ?"

"*C'est vrai.* Nothing like example, eh, Dubois ? What would Philip of Orleans have been but for thee ?"

"'L'exemple souvent n'est qu'un miroir trompeur,
Quelquefois l'un se brise où l'autre s'est sauvé,
Et par où l'um périt, un autre est conservé,'"

answered Dubois out of *Cinna.*

"Corneille is right," rejoined the Regent. After all, to do thee justice, *mon petit Abbè,* example has little to do with corrupting us. Nature pleads the cause of Pleasure, as Hyperides pleaded that of Phryne. She has no need of eloquence : *she unveils the bosom of her client, and the client is acquitted.*"

"Monseigneur shows at least that he has learned to profit by my humble instructions in the classics," said Dubois.

The Duke did not answer. I turned my eyes to some drawings on the table—I expressed my admiration of them. "They are mine," said the Regent. "Ah ! I should have been much more accomplished as a private gentleman, than I fear I ever shall be as a public man of toil and business. Business—bah ! But Necessity is the only real king in the world, the only enviable despot for whom there is no law. What ! are you going already, Count Devereux ?"

"Monseigneur's anteroom is crowded with less fortunate persons than myself, whose sins of envy and covetousness I am now answerable for."

"Ah—well ! I must hear the poor devils ; the only pleasure I have is in seeing how easily I can make them happy. Would to God, Dubois, that one could govern a great kingdom only by fair words ! Count Devereux, you have seen me to-day as my acquaintance ; see me again as my petitioner. *Bon jour, Monsieur.*"

And I retired, very well pleased with my reception : from that time, indeed, during my short stay at Paris, the prince honoured me with his especial favour. But I have dwelt too long on my *séjour* at the French court. The persons whom I have described, and who alone made that *séjour* memorable, must be my apology.

One day I was honoured by a visit from from the Abbé Dubois. After a short conversation upon indifferent things, he accosted me thus :

"You are aware, Count Devereux, of the partiality which the Regent has conceived towards you. Fortunate would it be for that Prince," (here Dubois elevated his brows with an ironical and arch expression,) "so good by disposition, so injured by example, if his partiality had been more frequently testified toward gentlemen of your merit. A mission of considerable importance, and one demanding great personal address, gives his Royal Highness an opportunity of testifying his esteem for you. He honoured me with a conference on the subject yesterday, and has now commissioned me to explain to you the technical objects of this mission, and to offer to you the honour of conveying it. Should you accept the proposals, you will wait upon his highness before his levee to-morrow."

Dubois then proceeded in the clear rapid manner peculiar to him, to comment on the state of Europe. "For France," said he, in concluding his sketch, "peace is absolutely necessary. A drained treasury, an exhausted country, require it. You see from what I have said, that Spain and England are the principal quarters, from which we are to dread hostilities. Spain we must guard against —England we must propitiate; the latter object is easy in England in any case, whether James or George be uppermost. For whoever is king in England, will have quite enough to do at home, to make him agree willingly enough to peace abroad. The former requires a less simple and a more enlarged policy. I fear the ambition of the Queen of Spain, and the turbulent genius of her minion Alberoni. We must fortify ourselves by new forms of alliance, at various courts, which shall at once defend us and intimidate our enemies. We wish to employ some nobleman of ability and address, on a secret mission to Russia—will you be that person? Your absence from Paris will be but short—you will see a very droll country, and a very droll sovereign; you will return hither, doubly the rage, and with a just claim to more important employment hereafter. What say you to the proposal?"

"I must hear more," said I, "before I decide."

The Abbé renewed. It is needless to repeat all the particulars of the commission that he enumerated. Suffice it that after a brief consideration, I accepted the honour proposed to me. The Abbé wished me joy, relapsed into his ordinary strain of coarse levity for a few minutes, and then reminding me that I was to attend the Regent on the morrow, departed. It was easy to see, that in the mind

of that subtle and crafty ecclesiastic, with whose manœuvres private intrigues were always blended with public, this offer of employment veiled a desire to banish me from the immediate vicinity of the good-natured Regent, whose favour the aspiring Abbé wished at that exact moment exclusively to monopolize. Mere men of pleasure, he knew, would not interfere with his aims upon the prince; mere men of business still less: but a man who was thought to combine the capacities of both, and who was moreover distinguished by the Regent, he deemed a more dangerous rival than the inestimable person thus suspected really was.

However, I cared little for the honest man's motives. Adventure to me had always greater charms than dissipation, and it was far more agreeable to the nature of my ambition, to win distinction by any honourable method, than by favouritism at a court, so hollow, so unprincipled, and so grossly licentious as that of the Regent. There, to be the most successful courtier, was to be the most amusing *débauché*. Alas, when the heart is away from its objects, and the taste revolts from its excess, Pleasure is worse than palling—it is a torture!—and the devil in Jonson's play, did not perhaps greatly belie the truth, when he averred "that the pains in his native country were pastimes to the life of a person of Fashion."

The Duke of Orleans received me the next morning with more than his wonted *bonhomie*. What a pity that so good-natured a prince should have been so bad a man! He enlarged more easily and carelessly than his worthy preceptor had done, upon the several points to be observed in my mission—then very condescendingly told me he was very sorry to lose me from his court, and asked me, at all events, before I left Paris, to be a guest at one of his select suppers. I appreciated this honour at its just value. To these suppers, none were asked but the Prince's chums, or *roués*,* as he was pleased to call them. As *entre nous* these chums were for the most part the most good-for-nothing people in the kingdom, I could not but feel highly flattered at being deemed by so deep a judge of character as the regent, worthy to join them. I need not say that the invitation was eagerly accepted, nor that I left *Philippe le Débonnaire* impressed with the idea of his being the

* The term *Roué*, now so comprehensive, was first given by the regent to a select number of his friends; according to them, because they would be broken on the wheel for his sake; according to himself, because they deserved to be so broken.—Ed.

most admirable person in Europe. What a fool a great man is if he does not study to be affable—weigh a prince's condescension in one scale, and all the cardinal virtues in the other, and the condescension will outweigh them all. The Regent of France ruined his country as much as he well could do, and there was not a dry eye when he died. Even the memory of Charles II., who was both privately and publicly, the most consummate rascal that England ever saw, is to this day rather popular than otherwise. O, manner, manner, there is no hypocrite so successful as you!

A day had now effected a change—a great change in my fate. A new court—a new theatre of action—a new walk of ambition, were suddenly opened to me. Nothing could be more promising than my first employment—nothing could be more pleasing than the anticipation of change. "I must force myself to be agreeable to-night," said I, as I dressed myself for the regent's supper. "I must leave behind me the remembrance of a *bon mot*, or I shall be forgotten."

And I was right. In that whirlpool, the capital of France, every thing sinks but wit—*that* is always on the surface, and we must cling to it with a firm grasp if we would not go down to—"the deep oblivion."

CHAPTER X.

Royal Exertions for the good of the People.

WHAT a singular scene was that private supper with the Regent of France and his *roués!* The party consisted of twenty: nine gentlemen of the court besides myself, four men of low rank and character—but admirable buffoons—and six ladies, such ladies as the duke loved best—witty, lively, sarcastic, and good for nothing.

De Chatran accosted me.

"*Je suis ravi, mon cher Monsieur Devereux,*" said he, gravely, "to see you in such excellent company—you must be a little surprised to find yourself here!"

"Not at all! Every scene is worth one visit. He, my good Monsieur Chatran, who goes to the House of Correction once, is a philosopher—he who goes twice, is a rogue!"

"Thank you, Count—what am I then—I have been *here* twenty times?"

"Why, I will answer you with a story. The soul of a Jesuit one night, when its body was asleep, wandered down to the lower regions; Satan caught it, and was about to consign it to some appropriate place; the soul tried hard to excuse itself: you know what a cunning thing a Jesuit's soul is! 'Monsieur Satan,' said the spirit; 'no king should punish a traveller as he would a native. Upon my honour, I am merely here *en voyageur*.' 'Go, then, *mon père!*' said *le bon* Satan, and the soul flew back to its body. But the Jesuit died, and came *à l'enfer* a second time. He was brought before his Satanic majesty, and made the same excuse. 'No, no,' cried Beelzebub; 'once here is to be only *le diable voyageur*—twice here, and you are *le diable tout bon*.'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Chatran, laughing; "I then am the *diable tout bon!* 'tis well I *am no worse;* for we reckon the *roués* a devilish deal worse than the very worst of the devils—but see, the regent approaches us."

And, leaving a very pretty and *enjouée* looking lady, the regent sauntered towards us. It was in walking, by the by, that he lost all the grace of his mien. I don't know, however, that one wishes a great man to be graceful, so long as he's familiar.

"Aha, Monsieur Devereux!" said he, "we will give you some lessons in cooking to-night—we shall show you how to provide for yourself in that barbarous country which you are about to visit. *Tout voyageur doit tout savoir!*"

"A very admirable saying; which leads me to understand that *Monseigneur* has been a great traveller," said I.

"Ay, in all things and *all places*—eh, count!" answered the regent, smiling; "but," here he lowered his voice a little, "I have never yet learned how *you* came so opportunely to our assistance that night. *Dieu me damne!* but it reminds me of the old story of the two sisters meeting at a gallant's house. 'Oh, sister, how came *you* here?' said one, in virtuous amazement. '*Ciel! ma sœur!*' cries the other; 'what brought *you?*'*

"Monseigneur is pleasant," said I, laughing; "but a man does now and then (though I own it is very seldom) do a good action, without having previously resolved to commit a bad one!"

* The reader will remember a better version of this anecdote in one of the most popular English comedies.—Ed.

"I like your parenthesis," cried the Regents, it reminds me of my friend, St. Simon, who thinks so ill of mankind, that I asked him one day, whether it was possible for him to despise any thing more than men? 'Yes,' said he, with a low bow, 'women!'"

"His experience," said I, glancing at the female part of the coterie, "was, I must own, likely to lead him to that opinion."

"None of your sarcasms, Monsieur," cried the Regent. "*L'amusement est un des besoins de l'homme*—as I hear young *Arouet* very pithily said the other day; and we owe gratitude to whomsoever it may be that supplies that want. Now, you will agree with me that none supply it like women; therefore we owe them gratitude; therefore we must not hear them abused. Logically proved, I think!"

"Yes indeed," said I, "it is a pleasure to find that they have so able an advocate; and that your Highness can so well apply to yourself *both* the assertions in the motto of the great master of fortification, Vauban—'I destroy, but I defend.'"

"Enough," said the duke, *en riant*, "now to *our fortifications*;" and he moved away towards the women. I followed the royal example; and soon found myself seated next to a pretty, and very small woman. We entered into conversation; and, when once begun, my fair companion took care that it should not cease, without a miracle. By the goddess Facundia, what volumes of words issued from that little mouth! and on all subjects too! church—state—law—politics—play-houses—lampoons—lace—liveries—kings—queens—roturiers—beggars—you would have thought, had you heard her, so vast was her confusion of all things, that chaos had come again. Our royal host did not escape her. "You never before supped here *en famille*," said she,—"*Mon Dieu!* it will do your heart good to see how much the Regent will eat. He has such an appetite—you know he never eats any dinner in order to eat the more at supper. You see that little dark woman he is talking to?—well, she is *Madame de Parabère*—he calls her his little black crow—was there ever such a pet name? Can you guess why he likes her? Nay, never take the trouble of thinking—I will tell you at once—simply because she eats and drinks so much. *Parole d'honneur* 'tis true. The Regent says he likes sympathy in all things!—is it not droll? What a hideous old man is that *Nocé*—his face looks as if it had caught the rainbow

That impudent fellow *Dubois* scolded him for squeezing so many *louis* out of the good Regent. The yellow creature attempted to deny the fact. 'Nay,' cried Dubois, 'you cannot contradict me; I see their very ghosts in your face.'"

While my companion was thus amusing herself, *Nocé*, unconscious of her panegyric on his personal attractions, joined us

"Ah! my dear *Nocé*," said the lady, most affectionately, "how well you are looking! I am delighted to see you."

"I do not doubt it," said *Nocé*, "for I have to inform you that your petition is granted; your husband will have the place."

"Oh, how eternally grateful I am to you!" cried the lady in an ecstacy: "my poor dear husband will be so rejoiced. I wish I had wings to fly to him!"

The gallant *Nocé* uttered a compliment—I thought myself *de trop*, and moved away. I again encountered *Chatran*.

"I overheard your conversation with Madame la Marquise," said he, smiling; "she has a bitter tongue—has she not?"

"Very! how she abused the poor rogue *Nocé!*"

"Yes, and yet he is her lover!"

"Her lover!—you astonish me; why, she seemed almost fond of her husband—the tears came in her eyes when she spoke of him."

"She *is* fond of him!" said Chatran, dryly. "She loves the ground he treads on—it is precisely for that reason she favours Nocé; she is never happy but when she is procuring something *pour son cher bon mari*. She goes to spend a week at Nocé's country-house, and writes to her husband, with a pen dipped in *her blood*, saying, 'My heart is with thee!'"

"Certainly," said I, "France is the land of enigmas; the sphynx must have been a *Parisienne*. And when Jupiter made man, he made two natures utterly distinct from one another. One was *Human nature*, and the other *French nature!*"

At this moment supper was announced. We all adjourned to another apartment, where, to my great surprise, I observed the cloth laid—the sideboard loaded—the wines ready, but nothing to eat on the table! A Madame de Savori, who was next me, noted my surprise.

"What astonishes you, Monsieur?" said she.

"*Nothing*, Madame!" said I, "that is, the absence of *all* things."

"What! you expected to see supper?"

"I own my delusion—I did."

"It is not cooked yet!"

"Oh! well, I can wait!"

"And officiate too!" said the *petite Savori*;—"in a word, this is one of the Regent's cooking nights."

Scarcely had I received this explanation, before there was a general adjournment to an inner apartment, where all the necessary articles for cooking were ready to our hand.

"The Regent led the way,
To light us to our prey,"

and with an irresistible gravity and importance of demeanour, entered upon the duties of *chef*. In a very short time we were all engaged. Nothing could exceed the zest with which every one seemed to enter into the rites of the kitchen. You would have imagined that they had been born scullions, they handled the *batterie de cuisine* so naturally. As for me, I sought protection with Madame de Savori; and as, fortunately, she was very deeply skilled in the science, she had occasion to employ me in many minor avocations which her experience taught her would not be above my comprehension.

After we had spent a certain time in this dignified occupation, we returned to the *salle à manger*. The attendants placed the dishes on the table, and we all fell to. Whether out of self-love to their own performances, or complaisance to the performances of others, I cannot exactly say, but certain it is that all the guests acquitted themselves *à merveille*; you would not have imagined the Regent the only one who had gone without dinner to eat the more at supper. Even that devoted wife to her *cher bon mari*, who had so severely dwelt upon the good Regent's infirmity, occupied herself with an earnestness, that would have seemed almost wolf-like in a famished grenadier.

Very slight indeed was the conversation till the supper was nearly over, then the effects of the wine became more perceptible. The Regent was the first person who evinced that he had eat sufficiently to be able to talk. Utterly dispensing with the slightest veil of reserve or royalty, he leaned over the table, and poured forth a whole tide of jests. The guests then began to think it was indecorous to stuff

themselves any more, and as well as they were able they followed their host's example. But the most amusing personages were the buffoons: they mimicked, and joked, and lampooned, and lied, as if by inspiration. As the bottle circulated, and talk grew louder, the lampooning and the lying were not, however, confined to the buffoons. On the contrary, the best born, and best bred people, seemed to excel the most in those polite arts. Every person who boasted a fair name or a decent reputation at court, was seized, condemned, and mangled in an instant. And how elaborately the good folks slandered! It was no hasty word and flippant repartee which did the business of the absent—there was a precision, a polish, a labour of malice, which showed that each person had brought so many reputations already cut up. The good-natured convivialists differed from all other backbiters that I have ever met, in the same manner as the toads of Surinam differ from all other toads, viz. their venomous offspring were not half formed, misshapen tadpoles of slander, but sprung at once into life—well shaped and fully developed.

"*Chantons!*" cried the Regent, whose eyes, winking and rolling, gave token of his approaching that state which equals the beggar to the king, "let us have a song. *Nocé*, lift up thy voice, and let us hear what the tokay has put into thy head!"

Nocé obeyed, and sang as men half drunk generally do sing.

"*O Ciel!*" whispered the malicious Savori, "what a hideous screech—one would think he had *turned his face into a voice!*"

"*Bravissimo!*" cried the duke, when his guest had ceased,—"what happy people we are! Our doors are locked—not a soul can disturb us—we have plenty of wine—we are going to get drunk—and we have all Paris to abuse! What were you saying of Marshal Villars, my little Parabère?"

And pounce went the little Parabère upon the unfortunate marshal. At last slander had a respite—nonsense began its reign—the full inspiration descended upon their orgies—the good people lost the use of their faculties. Noise, clamour, uproar, broken bottles, falling chairs, and (I grieve to say) their occupants falling too—conclude the scene of the royal supper Let us drop the curtain.

CHAPTER XI.

An Interview.

I WENT a little out of my way, on departing from Paris, to visit Lord Bolingbroke, who at that time was in the country. There are some men whom one never really sees in capitals; one sees their masks, not themselves: Bolingbroke was one. It was in retirement, however brief it might be, that his true nature expanded itself, and weary of being admired, he allowed one to love, and even in the wildest course of his earlier excesses, to repect him. My visit was limited to a few hours, but it made an indelible impression on me.

"Once more," I said, as we walked to and fro in the garden of his temporary retreat, "once more you are in your element: minister and statesman of a prince, and chief supporter of the great plans which are to restore him to his throne."

A slight shade passed over Bolingbroke's fine brow. "To you, my constant friend," said he, "to you—who of all my friends alone remained true in exile, and unshaken by misfortune—to you I will confide a secret that I would intrust to no other. I repent me already of having espoused this cause. I did so while yet the disgrace of an unmerited attainder tingled in my veins: while I was in the full tide of those violent and warm passions which have so often misled me. Myself attainted—the best beloved of my associates in danger—my party deserted, and seemingly lost but for some bold measure such as then offered: these were all that I saw. I listened eagerly to representations I now find untrue; and I accepted that rank and power from one prince which were so rudely and gallingly torn from me by another. I perceive that I have acted imprudently, but what is done, is done; no private scruples, no private interest shall make me waver in a cause that I have once pledged myself to serve; and if I *can* do aught to make a weak cause powerful, and a divided party successful, I will; but Devereux, you are wrong, this is *not* my element. Ever in the paths of strife, I have sighed for quiet, and while most eager in pursuit of ambition, I have

languished the most fondly for content. The littleness of intrigue disgusts me, and while *the branches* of my power soared the highest, and spread with the most luxuriance, it galled me to think of the miry soil in which that power was condemned to strike *the roots*,* upon which it stood, and by which it must be nourished."

I answered Bolingbroke as men are wont to answer statesmen who complain of their *metier*—half in compliment, half in contradiction, but he replied with unusual seriousness.

"Do not think I affect to speak thus: you know how eagerly I snatch any respite from state, and how unmovedly I have borne the loss of prosperity and of power. You are now about to enter those perilous paths which I have trod for years. Your passions, like mine, are strong! Beware, oh, beware, how you indulge them without restraint! They are the fires which should warm: let them not be the fires which destroy."

Bolingbroke paused in evident and great agitation—he resumed: "I speak strongly, for I speak in bitterness; I was thrown early into the world: my whole education had been framed to make me ambitious: it succeeded in its end. I was ambitious, and of all success—success in pleasure, success in fame. To wean me from the former, my friends persuaded me to marry—they chose my wife for her connexions and her fortune, and I gained those advantages at the expense of what was better than either—happiness! You know how unfortunate has been that marriage, and how young I was when it was contracted. Can you wonder that it failed in the desired effect? Every one courted me, every temptation assailed me; pleasure even became more alluring abroad, when at home I had no longer the hope of peace: the indulgence of one passion begat the indulgence of another; and though my better sense *prompted* all my actions, it never *restrained* them to a proper limit. Thus the commencement of my actions has been generally prudent, and their *continuation* has deviated into rashness, or plunged into excess. Devereux, I have paid the forfeit of my errors with a terrible interest—when my motives have been pure, men have seen a fault in the conduct, and calumniated the motives; when my con-

* Occasional writer—No. 1. The Editor has, throughout this work, usually noted the passages in Bolingbroke's writings, in which there occur similes, illustrations, or striking thoughts, correspondent with those in the text. For the *general* vein of reflection or conversation ascribed in these pages to Lord Bolingbroke, Count Devereux must be answerable.

duct has been blameless, men have remembered its former errors, and asserted that its present goodness only arose from some sinister intention—thus I have been termed crafty, when I was in reality rash, and that was called the inconsistency of interest, which in reality was the inconstancy of passion.* I have reason therefore to warn you how you suffer your subjects to become your tyrants; and believe me no experience is so deep as that of one who has committed faults, and who has discovered their causes."

"Apply, my dear lord, that experience to your future career. You remember what the most sagacious of all pedants,† even though he was an emperor, has so happily expressed—'Repentance is a goddess, and the preserver of those who have erred.'"

"May *I find* her so!" answered Bolingbroke; "but as *Montaigne* or *Charron* would say, '*l'homme se pipe*‡—man is at once his own sharper and his own bubble.' We make vast promises to ourselves, and a passion, an example, sweeps even the remembrance of those promises from our minds. One is too apt to believe men hypocrites, if their conduct squares not with their sentiments; but *perhaps no vice is more rare, for no task is more difficult, than systematic hypocrisy;* and the same susceptibility which exposes men to be easily impressed by the allurements of vice, render them at heart most struck by the loveliness of virtue. Thus, their language and their hearts worship the divinity of the latter, while their conduct strays the most erringly towards the false shrines over which the former presides. Yes! I have never been blind to the surpassing excellence of GOOD. The still sweet whispers of virtue have been heard, even when the storm has been loudest, and the bark of reason been driven the most impetuously over the waves: and at this moment, I am impressed with

* This I do believe to be the real (though perhaps it is a new) light in which Lord Bolingbroke's life and character are to be viewed. The same writers who tell us of his ungovernable passions, always prefix to his name the epithets "designing, cunning, crafty," &c. Now I will venture to tell these historians that if they had studied human nature instead of party pamphlets, they would have discovered that there are certain incompatible qualities which can never be united in one character—that no man can have violent passions to *which he is in the habit of yielding*, and be systematically crafty and designing. No man can be all heat, and at the same time all coolness; but opposite causes not unoften produce like effects. Passion usually makes men changeable, so sometimes does craft; hence the mistake of the uninquiring or the shallow; and hence while * * * writes, and * * * * compiles, will the characters of great men be transmitted to posterity misstated and belied.—ED.

† The Emperor Julian. The original expression is paraphrased in the text.

‡ "Spirit of Patriotism."—ED.

a foreboding, that, sooner or later, the whispers will not only be heard, but their suggestion be obeyed; and that far from courts and intrigue, from dissipation and ambition, I shall learn in retirement, the true principles of wisdom, and the real objects of life."

Thus did Bolingbroke converse, and thus did I listen, till it was time to depart. I left him impressed with a melancholy that was rather soothing than distasteful. Whatever were the faults of that most extraordinary and most dazzling genius, no one was ever more candid* in confessing his errors. A systematically bad man either ridicules what is good, or disbelieves in its existence; but no man can be hardened in vice, whose heart is still sensible of the excellence and the glory of virtue.

* It is impossible to read the letter to Sir W. Windham, without being remarkably struck with the dignified and yet open candour which it displays. The same candour is equally visible in whatever relates to *himself*, in all Lord Bolingbroke's writings and correspondence, and yet candour is the last attribute usually conceded to him. But never was there a writer whom people have talked of more and read less; and I do not know a greater proof of this than the ever-repeated assertion (echoed from a most incompetent authority) of the said letter to Sir W. Windham being the finest of all Lord Bolingbroke's writings. It is an article of great value to the history of the times; but as to all the higher graces and qualities of composition, it is one of the least striking (and on the other hand it is one of the most verbally incorrect) which he has bequeathed to us (the posthumous works always excepted). I am not sure whether the most brilliant passages—the most noble illustrations—the most profound reflections, and the most useful truths—to be found in all his writings, are not to be gathered from the least popular of them—such as that volume entitled "Political Tracts."—ED.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

A Portrait.

MYSTERIOUS impulse at the heart, which never suffers us to be at rest, which urges us onward as by an unseen, yet irresistible law—human planets in a petty orbit, hurried for ever and for ever, till our course is run and our light is quenched—through the circle of a dark and impenetrable destiny! art thou not some faint forecast and type of our wanderings hereafter? of the unslumbering nature of the soul? of the everlasting progress which we are predoomed to make through the countless steps, and realms, and harmonies in the infinite creation? Oh, often in my rovings have I dared to dream so, often have I soared on the wild wings of thought above the "smoke and stir" of this dim earth, and wrought from the restlessness and visions of my mind, a chart of the glories and the wonders which the released spirit may hereafter visit and behold!

What a glad awakening from self,—what a sparkling and fresh draught from a new source of being,—what a wheel within wheel, animating, impelling, arousing all the rest of this animal machine, is the first excitation of travel! The first free escape from the bonds of the linked and tame life of cities and social vices,—the jaded pleasure and the hollow love, the monotonous round of sordid objects and dull desires,—the eternal chain that binds us to things and beings, mockeries of ourselves,—alike, but oh, how different! this shock that brings us nearer to men only to make us strive against them, and learn from the harsh contest of veiled deceit and open force, that the more we share the aims of others, the more deeply and basely rooted we grow to the littleness of self.

I passed more lingeringly through France than I did through the other portions of my *route*. I had dwelt long enough in the capital to be anxious to survey the country.

It was then that the last scale which the magic of Louis Quatorze, and the memory of his gorgeous court had left upon the moral eye, fell off, and I saw the real essence of that monarch's greatness and the true relics of his reign. I saw the poor, and the degraded, and the racked, and the priest-ridden tillers and peoplers of the soil, which made the substance beneath the glittering and false surface—the body of that vast empire, of which I had hitherto beheld only the face, and THAT darkly, and for the most part covered by a mask!

No man can look upon France, beautiful France, her rich soil, her temperate, yet maturing clime, the gallant and bold spirits which she produces, her boundaries so indicated and protected by nature itself, her advantages of ocean and land, of commerce and agriculture, and not wonder that her prosperity should be so bloated, and her real state so wretched and diseased.

Let England draw the moral, and beware not only of wars which exhaust, but of governments which impoverish. A waste of the public wealth is the most lasting of public afflictions; and 'the treasury which is drained by extravagance must be refilled by crime.'*

I remember one beautiful evening an accident to my carriage occasioned my sojourn for a whole afternoon in a small village. The *Curé* honoured me with a visit, and we strolled, after a slight repast, into the hamlet. The priest was complaisant, quiet in manner, and not ill-informed, for his obscure station and scanty opportunities of knowledge; he did not seem, however, to possess the vivacity of his countrymen, but was rather melancholy and pensive, not only in his expression of countenance, but his cast of thought.

"You have a charming scene here; I almost feel as if it were a sin to leave it so soon."

We were, indeed, in a pleasant and alluring spot at the time I addressed this observation to the good Curé. A little rivulet emerged from a copse to the left, and ran sparkling and dimpling beneath our feet, to deck with a more living verdure the village green, which it intersected with a winding, nor unmelodious stream. We had paused, and I was leaning against an old and solitary chesnut-tree, which commanded the whole scene. The village was a little in the rear, and the smoke from its few chimneys,

* Tacitus.

rose slowly and beauteously to the silent and deep skies, not wholly unlike the human wishes, which, though they spring from the grossness and the fumes of earth, purify themselves as they ascend to heaven. And from the village, (when other sounds, which I shall note presently were for an instant still,) came the whoop of children, mellowed by distance, into a confused, yet thrilling sound, which fell upon the heart like the voice of our gone childhood itself. Before, in the far expanse, stretched a chain of hills on which the autumn sun sunk slowly, pouring its yellow beams over groupes of peasantry, which on the opposite side of the rivulet and at some interval from us, were scattered, partly over the green, and partly gathered beneath the shade of a little grove. The former were of the young, and those to whom youth's sports are dear, and were dancing to the merry music, which (ever and anon blended with the laugh and the tone of a louder jest,) floated joyously on our ears. The fathers and matrons of the hamlet, were inhaling a more quiet joy beneath the trees, and I involuntarily gave a tenderer interest to their converse, by supposing them to sanction to each other the rustic loves which they might survey among their children.

"Will not Monsieur draw nearer to the dancers," said the Curé; "there is a plank thrown over the rivulet a little lower down?"

"No!" said I, "perhaps they are seen to better advantage where we are—what mirth will bear too close an inspection?"

"True, Sir," remarked the priest, and he sighed.

"Yet," I resumed, musingly, and I spoke rather to myself than to my companion, "yet how happy do they seem! what a revival of our Arcadian dreams, are the flute and the dance, the glossy trees all glowing in the autumn sunset, the green sod, and the murmuring rill, and the buoyant laugh startling the satyr in his leafy haunts; and the rural loves which will grow sweeter still, when the sun has set, and the twilight has made the sigh more tender, and the blush of a mellower hue! Ah, why is it only the revival of a dream? why must it be only an interval of labour and wo—the brief saturnalia of slaves—the green resting spot in a dreary and long road of travail and toil?"

"You are the first stranger I have met," said the Curé, "who seems to pierce beneath the thin veil of our Gallic

gayety; the first to whom the scene we now survey, is fraught with other feelings than a belief in the happiness of our peasantry, and an envy at its imagined exuberance. But as it is not the happiest individuals, so I fear it is not the happiest nations, that are the gayest."

I looked at the Curé with some surprise. "Your remark is deeper than the ordinary wisdom of your tribe, my father," said I.

"I have travelled over three parts of the globe," answered the Curé; "I was not always intended for what I am;" and the priest's mild eyes flashed with a sudden light, that as suddenly died away. "Yes, I have travelled over the greater part of the known world," he repeated, in a more quiet tone, "and I have noted, that where a man has many comforts to guard, and many rights to defend, he necessarily shares the thought and the seriousness of those who feel the value of a treasure which they possess, and whose most earnest meditations are intent upon providing against its loss. I have noted too, that the joy produced by a momentary suspense of labour, is naturally great, in proportion to the toil; hence it is, that no European mirth is so wild as that of the Indian slave, when a brief holyday releases him from his task. Alas! that very mirth is the strongest evidence of the weight of the previous chains; even as in ourselves we find the happiest moment we enjoy is that immediately succeeding the cessation of deep sorrow to the mind, or violent torture to the body."*

I was struck by this observation of the priest.

"I see now," said I, "that as an Englishman, I have no reason to repine at the proverbial gravity of my countrymen, or to envy the lighter spirit of the sons of Italy and France."

"No," said the Curé, "the happiest nations are those in whose people you witness the least sensible reverses from gayety to dejection; and that *thought*, which is the noblest characteristic of the isolated man, is also that of a people. Freemen are serious, they have objects at their heart, worthy to engross attention. It is reserved for slaves to indulge in groans at one moment and laughter at another."

* This reflection, if true, may console us for the loss of those village dances and peasant holydays for which "merry England" was once celebrated. The loss of them has been ascribed to the gloomy influence of the puritans; but it has never occurred to the good poets who have so mourned over that loss, that it is also to be ascribed to the *liberty* which those puritans *generalized*, if they did not introduce.—Ed.

"At that rate," said I, "the best sign for France will be, when the gayety of her sons is no longer a just proverb, and the laughing lip is succeeded by the thoughtful brow."

"That day will be the Hegira of our political happiness," said the Curé.

And we remained silent for several minutes; our conversation had shed a gloom over the light scene before us, and the voice of the flute no longer sounded musically on my ear. I proposed to the Curé to return to my *auberge*. As we walked slowly in that direction, I surveyed my companion more attentively than I had hitherto done. He was a model of masculine vigour and grace of form; and had I not looked earnestly upon his cheek, I should have thought him likely to outlive the very oaks around the hamlet church where he presided. But the cheek was worn and hectic, and seemed to indicate that the keen fire which burns at the deep heart, unseen, but unslaking, would consume the mortal fuel, long before Time should even have commenced his gradual decay.

"You have travelled then much, Sir," said I, and the tone of my voice was that of curiosity.

The good Curé penetrated into my desire to hear something of his adventures; and few are the recluses who are not gratified by the interest of others, or who are unwilling to reward it by recalling those portions of life most cherished by themselves. Before we parted that night, he told me his little history. He had been educated for the army; before he entered the profession he had seen the daughter of a neighbour—loved her—and the old story—she loved him again, and died before the love passed the ordeal of marriage. He had no longer a desire for glory, but he had for excitement. He sold his little property, and travelled, as he had said, for nearly fourteen years, equally over the polished lands of Europe, and the far climates, where Truth seems fable, and Fiction finds her own legends realized or excelled.

He returned home, poor in pocket, and wearied in spirit. He became what I beheld him. "My lot is fixed now," said he, in conclusion; "but I find there is all the difference between quiet and content; my heart eats itself away here: it is the moth fretting the garment laid by, more than the storm or the fray would have worn it."

I said something, common-place enough, about solitude, and the blessings of competence, and the country. The Curé shook his head gently, but made no answer, perhaps

he did wisely in thinking the feelings are ever beyond the reach of a stranger's reasoning. We parted more affectionately than acquaintances of so short a date usually do; and when I returned from Russia, I stopped at the village on purpose to inquire after him. A few months had done the work: the moth had already fretted away the human garment; and I walked to his lowly and nameless grave, and felt that it contained the only quiet in which monotony is not blended with regret.

CHAPTER II.

The Entrance into Petersburgh—a Rencontre with an inquisitive and mysterious Stranger—Nothing like Travel.

It was certainly like entering a new world when I had the frigid felicity of entering Russia. I expected to have found Petersburgh a wonderful city, and I was disappointed; it was a wonderful beginning of a city, and that was all I ought to have expected. But never, I believe, was there a place which there was so much difficulty in arriving at: such winds—such climate—such police arrangements—arranged, too, by such fellows! six feet high, with nothing human about them, but their uncleanness and ferocity! Such vexatious delays, difficulties, ordeals, through which it was necessary to pass, and to pass, too, with an air of the most perfect satisfaction and content. By the Lord! one would have imagined, at all events, it must be an earthly paradise, to be so arduous of access, instead of a Dutch-looking town, with comfortless canals, and the most terrible climate in which a civilized creature was ever frozen to death. "It is just the city a nation of bears would build, if bears ever became architects," said I to myself, as I entered the northern capital, with my teeth chattering, and my limbs in a state of perfect insensibility.

My vehicle stopped, at last, at a hotel to which I had been directed. It was a circumstance, I believe peculiar to Petersburgh, that at the time I speak of, none of its streets had a name: and if one wanted to find out a house, one was forced to do so by oral description. A pleasant thing it was, too, to stop in the middle of a street, to listen to such

description at full length, and find oneself rapidly becoming ice as the detail progressed. After I was lodged, thawed, and fed, I fell fast asleep, and slept for eighteen hours, without waking once; to my mind, it was a miracle I ever woke again.

I then dressed myself, and taking my interpreter, who was a Livonian, a great rascal, but clever, who washed twice a week, and did not wear a beard above eight inches long, I put myself into my carriage, and went to deliver my letters of introduction. I had one in particular to the Admiral Apraxin; and it was with him that I was directed to confer, previous to seeking an interview with the Emperor. Accordingly I repaired to his hotel, which was situated on a sort of quay, and was really, for Petersburgh, very magnificent. In this quarter then, or a little later, lived about thirty other officers of the court, General Jagoyinsky, General Cyernichoff, &c.; and, appropriately enough, the most remarkable public building in the vicinity, is the great slaughter-house—a fine specimen that of practical satire!

On endeavouring to pass through the Admiral's hall, I had the mortification of finding myself rejected by his domestics. As two men, in military attire, were instantly admitted, I thought this a little hard upon a man who had travelled so far to see his admiralship, and accordingly hinted my indignation to Mr. Muscotofsky, my interpreter.

"You are not so richly dressed as those gentlemen," said he.

"That is the reason, is it?"

"If it so please St. Nicholas, it is; and besides those gentlemen have two men running before them, to cry, 'Clear the way!'"

"I had better, then, dress myself better, and take two *avant couriers*."

"If it so please St. Nicholas."

Upon this I returned, robed myself in scarlet and gold, took a couple of lacqueys, returned to Admiral Apraxin's, and was admitted in an instant. Who would have thought these savages so like us? Appearances, you see, produce realities all over the world!

The Admiral, who was a very great man at court—though he narrowly escaped Siberia, or the knout some time after—was civil enough to me; but I soon saw, favourite as he was with the Czar, that great man left but petty moves in the grand chess-board of politics to be played by

any but himself; and my proper plan in this court appeared evidently to be unlike that pursued in most others, where it is better to win the favourite than the prince. Accordingly I lost no time in seeking an interview with the Czar himself, and readily obtained an appointment to that effect.

On the day before the interview took place, I amused myself with walking over the city, gazing upon its growing grandeur, and casting, in especial, a wistful eye upon the fortress or citadel, which is situated in an island, surrounded by the city; and upon the building of which more than one hundred thousand men are supposed to have perished. So great a sacrifice does it require to conquer nature.

While I was thus amusing myself, I observed a man in a small chaise with one horse pass me twice, and look at me very earnestly. Like most of my countrymen, I do not love to be stared at: however, I thought it better in that unknown country to change my intended frown for a good-natured expression of countenance, and turned away. A singular sight now struck my attention, a couple of men with beards that would have hidden a cassowary, were walking slowly along in their curious long garments, and certainly, (I say it reverently) disgracing the semblance of humanity, when just as they came by a gate, two other men of astonishing height, started forth, each armed with a pair of shears. Before a second was over, off went the beards of the first two passengers; and before another second expired, off went the skirts of their garments too. I never saw excrescences so expeditiously lopped. The two operators, who preserved a profound silence during this brief affair, then retired a little, and the mutilated wanderers pursued their way with an air of extreme discomfiture

"Nothing like travel certainly!" said I unconsciously aloud.

"True!" said a voice in English behind me. I turned, and saw the man who had noticed me so earnestly in the one horse chaise. He was a tall, robust man, dressed very plainly, and even shabbily, in a green uniform, with a narrow and tarnished gold lace; and I judged him to be a foreigner, like myself, though his accent and pronunciation evidently showed, that he was not a native of the country in whose language he accosted me.

"It is very true," said he again; "there is nothing like travel!"

"And travel," I rejoined, courteously, "in those places where travel seldom extends. I have only been six days at Petersburg, and till I came hither, I knew nothing of the variety of human nature or the power of human genius. But will you allow me to ask the meaning of the very singular occurrence we have just witnessed?"

"Oh, nothing," rejoined the man, with a broad strong smile, "nothing but an attempt to make men out of brutes. This custom of shaving is not, thank heaven, much wanted now—some years ago it was requisite to have several stations for barbers and tailors to perform their duties in. Now this is very seldom necessary: those gentlemen were especially marked out for the operation. By ——— (and here the man swore a hearty English and somewhat seafaring oath, which a little astonished me in the streets of Petersburg) I wish it was as easy to lop off all old customs! that it were as easy to clip *the beard of the mind*, Sir! Ha!—ha!"

"But the Czar must have found a little difficulty in effecting even this outward amendment, and, to say truth, I see so many beards about still, that I think the reform has been more partial than universal."

"Ah, those are the beards of the common people, the Czar leaves those for the present. Have you seen the docks yet?"

"No: I am not sufficiently a sailor to take much interest in them."

"Humph! humph! you are a soldier, perhaps?"

"I hope to be so, one day or other—I am not yet!"

"Not yet! humph! there are opportunities in plenty for those who wish it—what is your profession then, and what do you know best?"

I was certainly not charmed with the honest inquisitiveness of the stranger. A man does not so much take offence at impertinent questions if he can answer them readily, but they are perfectly inexcusable if he cannot. Now, that was just my case. Wise as the Count Devereux was, he would have found it no easy matter to say what he knew best. "Sir," said I, therefore, "Sir, my profession is to answer no questions; and what I know best is—to hold my tongue!"

The stranger laughed out. "Well, well, that is what all Englishmen know best!" said he; "but don't be offended—if you will come home with me I will give you a glass of brandy!"

"I am very much obliged for the offer, but business obliges me to decline it—good morning, Sir."

"Good morning!" answered the man, slightly moving his hat, in answer to my *congé*.

We separated, as I thought, but I was mistaken. As ill-luck would have it, I lost my way in endeavouring to return home. While I was interrogating a French artisan, who seemed in a prodigious hurry, as to my best *route*, up comes my inquisitive friend in green again. "Ha! you have lost your way—I can put you into it better than any man in Petersburgh!"

I thought it right to accept the offer, and we moved on, side by side. I now looked pretty attentively at my gentleman. I have said that he was tall and stout—he was also remarkably well built, and had a kind of seaman's ease and freedom of gait and manner. His countenance was very peculiar; short, firm, and strongly marked; a small, but thick mustachio, covered his upper lip—the rest of his face was shaved. His mouth was wide but closed, when silent, with that expression of iron resolution which no feature *but* the mouth can convey. His eyes were large, well opened, and rather stern; and when, which was often in the course of conversation, he pushed back his hat from his forehead, the motion developed two strong deep wrinkles between the eyebrows, which might be indicative either of thought or of irascibility—perhaps of both. He spoke quick, and with a little occasional embarrassment of voice, which, however, never communicated itself to his manner. He seemed, indeed, to have a perfect acquaintance with the mazes of the growing city; and, every now and then, stopped to say when such a house was built—whither such a street was to lead, &c. As each of these details betrayed some great triumph over natural obstacles, and sometimes over national prejudice, I could not help dropping a few enthusiastic expressions in praise of the genius of the Czar. The man's eyes sparkled as he heard them.

"It is easy to see," said I, "that you sympathize with me, and that the admiration of this great man is not confined to Englishmen. How little in comparison seem all other monarchs: they ruin kingdoms—the Czar creates one. The whole history of the world does not afford an instance of triumphs so vast—so important—so glorious as his has been. How his subjects should adore him!"

"No," said the stranger, with an altered and a thought-

ful manner, "it is not his subjects, but *their posterity*, that will appreciate his motives, and forgive him for wishing Russia to be an empire of MEN. The present generation may sometimes be laughed, sometimes forced, out of their more barbarous habits and brute-like customs, but they cannot be reasoned out of them; and they don't love the man who attempts to do it. Why, Sir, I question whether Ivan IV., who used to butcher the dogs between prayers for an occupation, and between meals for an appetite, I question whether his memory is not to the full as much loved as the living Czar. I know, at least, that whenever the latter attempts a reform, the good Muscovites shrug up their shoulders, and mutter, "We did not do these things in the good old days of Ivan IV."

"Ah! the people of all nations are wonderfully attached to their ancient customs. I will tell you who seem to me to have been the greatest enemies we living men ever had —our ancestors!"

"Ha! ha!—true—good!" cried the stranger; and then, after a short pause, he said, in a tone of deep feeling, which had not hitherto seemed at all a part of his character, "We should do that which is good to the human race, from some principle within, and should not therefore abate our efforts for the opposition, the rancour, or the ingratitude that we experience without. It will be enough reward for Peter I, if hereafter, when, (in that circulation of knowledge throughout the world which I can compare to nothing better than the circulation of the blood in the human body) the glory of Russia shall rest, not upon the extent of her dominions, but that of her civilization—not upon the number of inhabitants, embruted and besotted, but the number of enlightened, of prosperous, and of free men; it will be enough for him, if he be considered to have laid the first stone of that great change—if his labours be fairly weighed against the obstacles which opposed them—if, for his honest and unceasing endeavour to improve millions, he is not too severely judged for offences in a more limited circle—and if, in consideration of having fought the great battle against custom, circumstances, and opposing nature, he be sometimes forgiven for not having invariably conquered himself."

As the stranger broke off abruptly, I could not but feel a little impressed by his words and the energy with which they were spoken. We were now in sight of my lodging. I asked my guide to enter it; but the change in our con-

versation seemed to have unfitted him a little for my companionship.

"No," said he, "I have business now; we shall meet again; what 's your name?"

"Certainly," thought I, "no man ever scrupled so little to ask plain questions:" however, I answered him truly and freely.

"Devereux!" said he, as if surprised: "Ha!—well—we shall meet again. Good day."

CHAPTER III.

The Czar—the Czarina—a Feast at a Russian Nobleman's.

THE next day I dressed myself in my richest attire; and according to my appointment, went with as much state as I could command to the Czar's palace (if an exceedingly humble abode can deserve so proud an appellation). Although my mission was private, I was a little surprised by the extreme simplicity and absence from pomp which the royal residence presented. I was ushered for a few moments into a paltry antechamber, in which were several models of ships, cannon, and houses; two or three indifferent portraits—one of King William III., another of Lord Carmarthen. I was then at once admitted into the royal presence.

There were only two persons in the room—one a female, the other a man; no officers, no courtiers, no attendants, none of the insignia nor the witnesses of majesty. The female was Catherine, the Czarina; the man was the stranger I had met the day before—and Peter the Great. I was a little startled at the identity of the Czar with my inquisitive acquaintance. However, I put on as assured a countenance as I could. Indeed, I had spoken sufficiently well of the royal person to feel very little apprehension at having unconsciously paid so slight a respect to the royal dignity.

"Ho—ho!" cried the Czar, as I reverently approached him; "I told you we should meet soon!" and turning round, he presented me to her majesty. That extraordinary woman received me very graciously; and though I

had been a spectator of the most artificial and magnificent court in Europe, I must confess that I could detect nothing in the Czarina's air calculated to betray her having been the servant of a Lutheran minister and the wife of a Swedish dragoon. Whether it was that greatness was natural to her, or whether (which was more probable) she was an instance of the truth of Suckling's hackneyed thought, in Brennoralt—"Success is a rare paint—hides all the ugliness."

While I was making my salutations, the Czarina rose very quietly, and presently, to my no small astonishment, brought with her own hand, a tolerably large glass of raw brandy. There is nothing in the world I hate so much as brandy; however, I swallowed the potation as if it had been nectar, and made some fine speech about it, which the good Czarina did not seem perfectly to understand. I then, after a few preliminary observations, entered upon my main business with the Czar. Her majesty sat at a little distance, but evidently listened very attentively to the conversation. I could not but be struck with the singularly bold and strong sense of my royal host. There was no hope of deluding or misleading him by diplomatic subterfuge. The only way by which that wonderful man was ever misled, was through his passions. His reason conquered all errors but those of temperament. I turned the conversation as artfully as I could upon Sweden and Charles XII. "Hatred to one power," thought I, "may produce love to another; and if it does, the child will spring from a very vigorous parent." While I was on this subject, I observed a most fearful convulsion come over the face of the Czar—one so fearful, that I involuntarily looked away. Fortunate was it that I did so. Nothing ever enraged him more than being observed in those constitutional contortions of countenance to which from his youth he had been subjected.

After I had conversed with the Czar as long as I thought decorum permitted, I rose to depart. He dismissed me very complaisantly. I re-entered my fine equipage, and took the best of my way home.

Two or three days afterward, the Czar ordered me to be invited to a grand dinner at Apraxin's. I went there, and soon found myself in conversation with a droll little man, a Dutch minister, and a great favourite with the Czar. The admiral and *Madame sa femme*, before we sat down

to eat, handed round to each of their company a glass of brandy on a plate.

"What an odious custom!" whispered the little Dutch minister, smacking his lips, however, with an air of tolerable content.

"Why," said I, prudently, "all countries have their customs. Some centuries ago, a French traveller thought it horrible in us Englishmen to eat raw oysters. But the English were in the right to eat oysters; and perhaps, by and by, *so much does civilization increase*, we shall think the Russians in the right to drink brandy. But really, (we had now sat down to the entertainment,) I am agreeably surprised here. All the guests are dressed like my own countrymen; a great decorum reigns around. If it were a little less cold, I might fancy myself in London, or in Paris."

"Wait," quoth the little Dutchman, with his mouth full of jelly broth—"wait till you hear them talk. What think you, now, that lady next me is saying?"

"I cannot guess—but she has the prettiest smile in the world; and there is something at once so kind and so respectful in her manner, that I should say, she was either asking some great favour, or returning thanks for one."

"Right," cried the little minister, "I will interpret for you. She is saying to that old gentleman—'Sir, I am extremely grateful—(and may St. Nicholas bless you for it)—for your very great kindness in having, the day before yesterday, at your sumptuous entertainment, made me so deliciously—drunk!"

"You are witty, Monsieur," said I, smiling. "*Si non e vero e ben trovato.*"

"By my soul, it is true," cried the Dutchman; "but, hush!—see, they are going to cut up that great pie."

I turned my eyes to the centre of the table, which was ornamented with a huge pasty. Presently it was cut open, and out—walked a hideous little dwarf.

"Are they going to eat him?" said I.

"Ha—ha!" laughed the Dutchman. "No! this is a fashion of the Czar's, which the admiral thinks it good policy to follow. See, it tickles the hebete Russians. They are quite merry on it."

"To be sure," said I; "practical jokes are the only witticisms savages understand."

"Ay, and if it were not for such jokes now and then, the Czar would be odious beyond measure; but dwarf pies

and mock processions make his subjects almost forgive him for having shortened their clothes and clipped their beards."

"The Czar is very fond of those mock processions?"

"Fond!" and the little man sunk his voice into a whisper; "he is the sublimest buffoon that ever existed. I will tell you an instance: (do you like those Hungary wines, by the by?) On the 9th of last June, the Czar carried me and half-a-dozen more of the foreign ministers, to his pleasure-house (Peterhoff). Dinner as usual, all drunk with tokay, and finished by a quart of brandy each, from her majesty's own hand. Carried off to sleep,—some in the garden—some in the wood.—Woke at four, still in the clouds. Carried back to the pleasure-house, found the Czar there, made us a low bow, and gave us a hatchet apiece, with orders to follow him. Off we trudged, rolling about like ships in the Zuyder Sea, entered a wood, and were immediately set to work, at cutting a road in it. Nice work for us of the *corps diplomatique!* And, by my soul, Sir, you see that I am by no means a thin man! We had three hours of it—were carried back—made drunk again—sent to bed—woke in an hour—made drunk a third time; and, because we *could not* be waked again, left in peace till eight the next morning. Invited to court to breakfast—such headaches we had—longed for coffee—found nothing but brandy—forced to drink—sick as dogs—sent to take an airing upon the most damnable little horses, not worth a guilder—no bridles nor saddles—bump—bump—bump we go—up and down before the Czar's window—he and the Czarina looking at us. I do assure you I lost two stone by that ride—two stone, Sir!—taken to dinner—drunk again, by the Lord—all bundled on board a *torrenschute*—devil of a storm came on—Czar took the rudder—Czarina on high benches in the cabin, which was full of water—waves beating—winds blowing—certain of being drowned—charming prospect!—tossed about for seven hours—driven into the Port of Cronsflot. Czar leaves us, saying, 'Too much of a jest, eh, gentlemen!' All got ashore, wet as dog-fishes, made a fire, stripped stark naked, (a Dutch ambassador stark naked—think of it, Sir!) crept into some covers of sledges, and rose next morning with the ague—positive fact, Sir. Had the ague for two months. Saw the Czar in August—'charming excursion to my pleasure-house,' said his majesty—'we must make another party there soon.'"

As my little Dutchman delivered this *petite historiette*, he was by no means forgetful of the Hungary wines; and as Bacchus and Venus have old affinity, he now began to grow eloquent on the women.

"What think you of them yourself?" said he, "they have a rolling look, eh!"

"They have so," I answered, "but they all have black teeth—what is the reason?"

"They think it a beauty, and say white teeth are the sign of a blackamoor."

Here the Dutchman was accosted by some one else, and there was a pause Dinner at last ceased, the guests did not sit long after dinner, and for a very good reason: the brandy bowl is a great enforcer of a prostrate position. I had the satisfaction of seeing the company safely under the table. The Dutchman went first, and having dexterously manœuvred an escape from utter oblivion for myself, I managed to find my way home, more edified than delighted by the character of a Russian entertainment.

CHAPTER IV.

Conversations with the Czar—if Cromwell was the greatest man (Cæsar excepted) who ever rose to the Supreme Power, Peter was the greatest man ever born to it.

It was singular enough, that my introduction to the notice of Peter the Great, and Philip the Debonair, should have taken place under circumstances so far similar, that both those illustrious personages, were playing the part rather of subjects than of princes. I cannot, however, conceive a greater mark of the contrast between their characters, than the different motives and manners of the incognitos severally assumed.

Philip, in a scene of low riot and debauch, hiding the Jupiter under the Silenus—wearing the mask only for the licentiousness it veiled, and foregoing the prerogative of power, solely for indulgence in the grossest immunities of vice.

Peter, on the contrary, parting with the selfishness of state, in order to watch the more keenly over the interests

of his people—only omitting to preside in order to examine—and affecting the subject, only to learn the better, the duties of the prince. Had I leisure, I might here pause to point out a notable contrast, not between the czar and the regent, but between Peter the Great and *Louis le Grand*; both creators of a new era,—both associated with a vast change in the condition of two mighty empires. There ceases the likeness, and begins the contrast; the blunt simplicity of Peter, the gorgeous magnificence of Louis; the sternness of a legislator for barbarians, the clemency of an idol of courtiers. One the victorious defender of his country—a victory solid, durable, and just; the other the conquering devastator of a neighbouring people—a victory, glittering, evanescent, and dishonourable. The one, in peace, rejecting parade, pomp, individual honours, and transforming a wilderness into an empire: the other involved in ceremony, and throned in pomp; and exhausting the produce of millions to pamper the bloated vanity of an individual. The one a fire that burns, without enlightening beyond a most narrow circle, and whose lustre is tracked by what it ruins, and fed by what it consumes: the other a luminary, whose light, not so dazzling in its rays, spreads over a world, and is noted, not for what it destroys, but for what it vivifies and creates.

I cannot say that it was much to my credit that, while I thought the Regent's condescension towards me natural enough, I was a little surprised by the favour shown me by the Czar. At Paris, I had *seemed* to be the man of pleasure; that alone was enough to charm Philip of Orleans. But at Russia, what could I seem in any way calculated to charm the Czar? I could neither make ships, nor could sail them when they were made; I neither knew, nor, what was worse, cared to know, the stern from the rudder. Mechanics were a mystery to me; road-making was an incomprehensible science. Brandy I could not endure—a blunt bearing and familiar manner I could not assume. What was it then that made the Czar call upon me, at least twice a week, in private, shut himself up with me by the hour together, and endeavour to make me drunk with tokay, in order (as he very incautiously let out one night,) "to learn the secrets of my heart?" I thought, at first, that the nature of my mission was enough to solve the riddle: but we talked so little about it, that, with all my diplomatic vanities fresh about me, I could not

help feeling I owed the honour I received, less to my qualities as a minister, than to those as an individual.

At last, however, I found that the secret attraction was what the Czar termed the philosophical channel into which our conferences flowed. I never saw a man so partial to moral problems and metaphysical inquiries, especially to those connected with what ought to be the beginning or the end of all moral sciences—politics. Sometimes we would wander out in disguise, and select some object from the customs, or things around us, as the theme of reflection and discussion; nor in these moments would the Czar ever allow me to yield to his rank what I might not feel disposed to concede to his arguments. One day, I remember that he arrested me in the streets, and made me accompany him to look upon two men undergoing the fearful punishment of the battaog;* one was a German, the other a Russian; the former shrieked violently—struggled in the hands of his punishers—and, with the utmost difficulty, was subjected to his penalty; the latter bore it patiently, and in silence; he only spoke once, and it was to say, "God bless the Czar!"

"Can your majesty hear the man," said I, warmly, when the Czar interpreted these words to me, "and not pardon him?"

Peter frowned, but I was not silenced. "You don't know the Russians," said he, sharply, and turned aside The punishment was now over. "Ask the German," said the Czar to an officer, "what was his offence?" The German, who was writhing and howling horribly, uttered some violent words against the disgrace of the punishment, and the pettiness of the fault; what the fault was I forget.

"Now ask the Russian," said Peter. "My punishment was just!" said the Russian, coolly, putting on his clothes as if nothing had happened; "God and the Czar were angry with me!"

"Come away, Count," said the Czar; "and now solve me a problem. I know both those men; and the German, in a battle, would be the bravest of the two. How comes it that he weeps and writhes like a girl, while the Russian bears the same pain without a murmur?"

"Will your majesty forgive me," said I, "but I cannot help wishing that the Russian had complained more bitterly; insensibility to punishment is the sign of a brute,

* A terrible kind of flogging, but less severe than the knout.

not a hero. Do you not see that the German felt the indignity, the Russian did not; and do you not see that that very pride which betrays agony under the disgrace of the battaog, is exactly the very feeling that would have produced courage in the glory of the battle. A sense of honour makes better soldiers and better men, than indifference to pain."

"But had I ordered the Russian to death, he would have gone with the same apathy, and the same speech, 'It is just! I have offended God and the Czar!'"

"Dare I observe, Sire, that that fact would be a strong proof of the dangerous falsity of the old maxims, which extol indifference to death as a virtue. In some individuals it may be a sign of virtue, I allow; but as a *national* trait, it is the strongest sign of national misery. Look round the great globe. What countries are those where the inhabitants bear death with cheerfulness, or, at least, with apathy? Are they the most civilized—the most free—the most prosperous? Pardon me—no! They are the half-starved, half-clothed, half-human, sons of the forest and the waste; or, when gathered in states, they are slaves without enjoyment or sense beyond the hour; and the reason that they do not recoil from the pangs of death is because they have never known the real pleasures or the true objects of life."

"Yet," said the Czar, musingly, "the contempt of death was the great characteristic of the Spartans."

"And, therefore," said I, "the great token that the Spartans were a miserable horde. Your majesty admires England and the English; you have, beyond doubt, witnessed an execution in that country; you have noted, even where the criminal is consoled by religion, how he trembles, and shrinks—how dejected—how prostrate of heart he is before the doom is completed. Take now the vilest slave, either of the Emperor of Morocco, or the great Czar of Russia. He changes neither tint nor muscle: he requires no consolation: he shrinks from no torture. What is the inference? *That slaves dread death less than the free.* And it should be so. The end of legislation is not to make *death, but life,* a blessing.

"You have put the matter in a new light," said the Czar; "but you allow that, in individuals, contempt of death is sometimes a virtue."

"Yes, when it springs from mental reasonings, not physical indifference. But your majesty has already put in

action one vast spring of a system, which will ultimately open to your subjects so many paths of existence that they will preserve contempt for its proper objects, and not lavish it solely, as they do now, on the degradation which sullies life, and the axe that ends it. You have already begun the conquest of another and a most vital error in the philosophy of the ancients; that philosophy taught that man should have few wants, and made it a crime to increase, and a virtue to reduce them. A legislator should teach, on the contrary, that man should have many wants: for wants are not only the sources of enjoyment—they are the sources of improvement; and that nation will be the most enlightened among whose populace they are found the most numerous. You, Sire, by circulating the arts, the graces, and the wisdoms, if I may so say, of life, create a vast herd of moral wants hitherto unknown, and in those wants will hereafter be found the prosperity of your people, the fountain of your resources, and the strength of your empire."

In conversation on these topics we often passed hours together, and from such conferences the Czar passed only to those on other topics more immediately useful to him. No man, perhaps, had a larger share of the mere human frailties than Peter the Great; yet I do confess that when I saw the nobleness of mind, with which he flung aside his rank as a robe, and repaired from man to man, the humblest or the highest, the artisan or the prince,—the prosperity of his subjects his only object, and the acquisition of knowledge his only means to obtain it,—I do confess that my mental sight refused even to perceive his frailties, and that I could almost have bent the knee in worship to a being whose benevolence was so pervading a spirit, and whose power was so glorious a minister to utility.

Towards the end of January I completed my mission, and took my leave of the court of Russia.

"Tell the Regent," said Peter, "that I shall visit him in France soon, and shall expect to see his drawings if I show him my models."

In effect, the next month, (February 16) the Czar commenced his second course of travels. He was pleased to testify some regard for me on my departure. "If ever you quit the service of the French court, and your own does not require you, I implore you to come to me; I will give you *carte blanche* as to the nature and appointments of your office.

I need not say that I expressed my gratitude for the royal condescension; nor that, in leaving Russia, I brought, from the example of its sovereign, a greater desire to be useful to mankind than I had known before. Pattern and teacher of kings, if each country, in each century, had produced one such ruler as you, either all mankind would *now* be contented with despotism, or all mankind would be *free*. Oh! when kings have only to be good, to be kept for ever in our hearts and souls as the gods and benefactors of the earth, by what monstrous fatality have they been so blind to their fame! When we remember the millions, the generations, they can degrade, destroy, elevate or save, we might almost think (even if the other riddles of the present existence did not require a future existence to solve them,) we might almost think a hereafter *necessary*, were it but for the sole purpose of requiting the virtues of princes, or their SINS !*

CHAPTER V.

Return to Paris—Interview with Bolingbroke—A gallant Adventure—Affair with Dubois—Public Life is a Drama, in which private Vices generally play the part of the scene-shifters.

It is a strange feeling we experience on entering a great city by night—a strange mixture of social and solitary impressions. I say by night, because at that time we are most inclined to feel; and the mind, less distracted than in the day, by external objects, dwells the more intensely upon its own hopes and thoughts, remembrances and associations—and sheds over them, from that one feeling which it cherishes the most, a blending and a mellowing hue.

It was at night that I re-entered Paris. I did not tarry long at my hotel, before (though it wanted not long to midnight) I conveyed myself to Lord Bolingbroke's lodgings. Knowing his engagements at St. Germains, where

* Upon his death-bed, Peter is reported to have said, "God, I dare trust, will look mercifully upon my faults, in consideration of the good I have done my country." These are worthy to be the last words of a king! Rarely has there been a monarch who more required the forgiveness of the Creator; yet never has there been a human being who more deserved it.—ED.

the Chevalier (who had but a very few weeks before returned to France, after the crude and unfortunate affair of 1715) chiefly resided, I was not very sanguine in my hopes of finding him at Paris. I was, however, agreeably surprised. His servant would have ushered me into his study, but I was willing to introduce myself. I withheld the servant, and entered the room alone.

The door was a-jar, and Lord Bolingbroke neither heard nor saw me. There was something in his attitude and aspect which made me pause to survey him, before I made myself known. He was sitting by a table covered with books. A large folio (it was the Casaubon edition of Polybius) was lying open before him. I recognised the work at once—it was a favourite book with Bolingbroke, and we had often discussed the merits of its author. I smiled as I saw that that book, which has to statesmen so peculiar an attraction, made still the study from which the busy, restless, ardent, and exalted spirit of the statesman before me drew its intellectual food. But at the moment in which I entered, his eye was absent from the page, and turned abstractedly in an opposite though still downcast direction. His countenance was extremely pale—his lips were tightly compressed, and an air of deep thought, mingled, as it seemed to me, with sadness—made the ruling expression of his lordly and noble features. "It is the torpor of ambition after one of its storms," said I, inly—and I approached and laid my hand on his shoulder.

After our mutual greetings, I said—"Have the dead so strong an attraction, that at this hour they detain the courted and courtly Bolingbroke from the admiration and converse of the living?"

The statesman looked at me earnestly—"Have you heard the news of the day?" said he.

"How is it possible? I have but just arrived at Paris."

"You do not know, then, that I have resigned my office under the chevalier!"

"Resigned your office?"

"Resigned is a wrong word—I received a dismissal. Immediately on his return the chevalier sent for me—embraced me—desired me to prepare to follow him to Lorraine; and three days afterward came the Duke of Ormond to me, to ask me to deliver up the seals and paper. I put the latter very carefully in a little letter case, and *viola* an end to the administration of Lord Bolingbroke. The Jacobites abuse me terribly—their king accuses me of

neglect, incapacity and treachery—and Fortune pulls down the fabric she had built for me, in order to pelt me with the stones!"*

"My dear, dear friend, I am indeed grieved for you; but I am more incensed at the infatuation of the chevalier. Surely, surely he must have already seen his error, and solicited your return."

"Return!" cried Bolingbroke, and his eyes flashed fire—"return! Hear what I said to the queen mother who came to me to attempt a reconciliation: 'Madam,' said I, in a tone as calm as I could command, 'if ever this hand draws the sword, or employs the pen, in behalf of that prince, may it rot!' Return! not if my head were the price of refusal! Yet, Devereux,"—(and here Bolingbroke's voice and manner changed)—"yet it is not at these tricks of fate that a wise man will repine. We do right to cultivate honours; they are sources of gratification to ourselves; they are more—they are incentives to the conduct which works benefit to others; but we do wrong to afflict ourselves at their loss. *Nec querere nec spernere honores oportet.* It is good to enjoy the blessings of fortune; it is better to submit without a pang to their loss. You remember, when you left me, I was preparing myself for this stroke—believe me, I am now prepared."

And in truth Bolingbroke bore the ingratitude of the chevalier well. Soon afterward he carried his long cherished wishes for retirement into effect; and fate, who delights in reversing her disk, leaving in darkness what she had just illumined, and illumining what she had hitherto left in obscurity and gloom, for a long interval separated us from each other, no less by his seclusion than by the publicity to which she condemned myself.

Lord Bolingbroke's dismissal was not the only event affecting me that had occurred during my absence from France. Among the most active partisans of the chevalier, in the expedition of Lord Mar, had been Montreuil. So great indeed had been either his services or the idea entertained of their value, that a reward of extraordinary amount was offered for his head. Hitherto he had escaped, and was supposed to be still in Scotland.

But what affected me more nearly was the condition of Gerald's circumstances. On the breaking out of the rebellion, he had been suddenly seized, and detained in prison;

* Letter to Sir W. Windham.—Ed.

and it was only upon the escape of the chevalier that he was released; nothing had, however, been apparently proved against him: and my absence from the head-quarters of intelligence, left me in ignorance, both of the grounds of his imprisonment, and the circumstances of his release.

I heard, however, from Bolingbroke, who seemed to possess some of that information which the ecclesiastical *intriguants* of the day so curiously transmitted from court to court, and corner to corner, that Gerald had retired to Devereux Court, in great disgust at his confinement. However, when I considered his bold character, his close intimacy with Montreuil, and the genius for intrigue which that priest so eminently possessed, I was not much inclined to censure the government for unnecessary precaution in his confinement.

There was another circumstance connected with the rebellion which possessed for me an individual and deep interest. A man of the name of Barnard had been executed in England for seditious and treasonable practices. I took especial pains to ascertain every particular respecting him. I learned that he was young, of inconsiderable note, but esteemed clever; and had, long previously to the death of the queen, been secretly employed by the friends of the chevalier. This circumstance occasioned me much internal emotion, though there could be no doubt that the Barnard whom I had such cause to execrate, had only borrowed from this minion the disguise of his name.

The Regent received me with all the graciousness and complaisance for which he was so remarkable. To say the truth, my mission had been extremely fortunate in its results; the only cause in which the Regent was concerned, the interests of which Peter the Great appeared to disregard, was that of the chevalier: but I had been fully instructed on that head anterior to my legation.

There appears very often to be a sort of moral fitness between the beginning and the end of certain alliances or acquaintances. This sentiment is not very clearly expressed. I am about to illustrate it by an important event in my political life. During my absence Dubois had made rapid steps towards being a great man. He was daily growing into power, and those courtiers who were neither too haughty nor too honest to bend the knee to so vicious yet able a minion, had already singled him out as a fit person to flatter and to rise by. For me, I neither sought

nor avoided him; but he was as civil towards me as his *brusque* temper permitted him to be towards most persons: and as our careers were not likely to cross one another, I thought I might reckon on his neutrality, if not on his friendship. Chance turned the scale against me.

One day I received an anonymous letter, requesting me to be, at such an hour, at a certain house in the Rue ——. It occurred to me as no improbable supposition that the appointment might relate to my individual circumstances, whether domestic or political, and I certainly had not at the moment any idea of gallantry in my brain. At the hour prescribed, I appeared at the place of assignation. My mind misgave me when I saw a female conduct me into a little chamber, hung with tapestry, descriptive of the loves of Mars and Venus. After I had cooled my heels in this apartment for about a quarter of an hour, in sailed a tall woman, of a complexion almost *Moorish*. I bowed—the lady sighed. An *éclaircissement* ensued—and I found that I had had the good fortune to be the object of a *caprice*, in the favourite mistress of the Abbé Dubois. Nothing was farther from my wishes! What a pity it is that one cannot always tell a woman one's mind!

I attempted a flourish about friendship, honour, and the respect due to the *amante* of the most intimate *ami* I had in the world.

"Pooh!" said the tawny Calypso, a little pettishly—"pooh! one does not talk of those things here."

"Madam," said I, very energetically, "I implore you to refrain. Do not excite too severe a contest between passion and duty! I feel that I must fly you—you are already too bewitching."

And I rose. To speak frankly, I did not wish to risk making a powerful enemy, for the sake of a woman whom I thought particularly plain. Not altogether of my mind was the tall lady. A farther conversation ensued, in the midst of which, in rushes the *femme de chambre*, and announces, not Monsieur, the abbé, but Monseigneur, the regent. Of course (the old resort in such cases) I was thrust into a closet; in marches his royal highness, and is received very cavalierly. It is quite astonishing to me what airs those women give themselves, when they have princes to manage! However, my confinement was not long—the closet had another door—the *femme de chambre* slips round, opens it, and I congratulate myself on my escape.

When a Frenchwoman is piqued, she passes all understanding: for my part, I think those very tall women, especially with that sultry, moorish tinge in them, are——. Well, it 's no matter. The next day I am very quietly employed at breakfast, when my valet ushers in a masked personage, and, behold my gentlewoman again! Human endurance will not go too far, and this was a case which required one to be in a passion one way or the other; so I feigned anger, and talked with exceeding dignity about the predicament I had been placed in the day before.

"Such must always be the case," said I, "when one is weak enough to form an attachment to a lady who encourages so many others!"

"For your sake," said the tender dame, "for your sake then, I will discard them all!"

There was something grand in this: it might have elicited a few strokes of pathos, when—never was there any thing so strangely provoking—the Abbé Dubois himself was heard in my anteroom. I thought this chance, but it was more; the good Abbé, I afterward found, had traced cause for suspicion, and had come to pay me a visit of amatory police. I opened my dressing-room door, and thrust in the lady. "There," said I, "are the back-stairs, and at the bottom of the back-stairs is a door."

Would not any one have thought this hint enough? By no means; this very tall lady stooped to the littleness of listening, and, instead of departing, stationed herself by the keyhole.

I never exactly learned whether Dubois suspected the visit his mistress had paid me, or whether he merely surmised, from her spies or her escritoire, that she harboured an inclination towards me; in either case his policy was natural, and like himself.

He sat himself down—talked of the Regent, of pleasure, of women, and, at last, of this very tall lady in question.

"*La pauvre diablesse*," said he, contemptuously, "I had once compassion on her: I have repented it ever since. You have no idea what a terrible creature she is—has such a wen in her neck—quite a *goître*. *Mort diable!*" (and the Abbé spat in his handkerchief.) "I would sooner have a *liaison* with the witch of Endor!"

Not content with this, he went on in his usual gross and displeasing manner to enumerate or to forge the various

particulars of her personal charms, which he thought most likely to steel me against her attractions. 'Thank Heaven, at least,' thought I, 'that she has gone.'

Scarcely had this pious gratulation flowed from my heart, before the door was burst open, and pale—trembling—eyes on fire—hands clenched—forth stalked the lady in question. A wonderful proof how much sooner a woman would lose her character, than allow it to be called not worth the losing. She entered; and had all the furies of Hades lent her their tongues she could not have been more eloquent. It would have been a very pleasant scene, if one had not been a partner in it. The old *Abbé*, with his keen astute marked face, struggling between surprise, fear, the sense of the ridiculous, and the certainty of losing his mistress; the lady—foaming at the mouth, and shaking her clenched hand most menacingly at her traducer—myself endeavouring to pacify, and acting, as one does at such moments, mechanically—though one flatters oneself afterward that one acted solely from wisdom.

But the Abbé's mistress was by no means content with vindicating herself—she retaliated—and gave so minute a description of the Abbé's own qualities and graces, coupled with so many pleasing illustrations, that in a very little time his coolness forsook him, and he grew in as great a rage as herself. At last she flew out of the room. The Abbé, trembling with passion, shook me most cordially by the hand, grinned from ear to ear, said it was a capital joke, wished me good by, as if he loved me better than his eyes, and left the house, my most irreconcileable and bitter foe!

How could it be otherwise? The rivalship the Abbé might have forgiven—such things happened every day to him—but the having been made so egregiously ridiculous, the Abbé in common humanity of nature could not forgive; and the Abbé's was a critical age for jesting on these matters, sixty or so. And then such unpalatable sarcasms on his appearance! "It 's all over in that quarter," said I to myself, "but we may find another," and I drove out that very day to pay my respects to the Regent.

What a pity it is that one's pride should so often be the bane of one's wisdom! Ah! that one could be as good a man of the world in practice, as one is in theory! my master-stroke of policy at that moment would evidently have been this: I should have gone to the Regent and made out a story a little similar to the real one, but with this differ-

ence, all the ridicule of the situation should have fallen upon me, and the little Dubois should have been elevated on a pinnacle of respectable appearances. This, as the Regent told the Abbé every thing, would have saved me. I saw the plan; but was too proud to adopt it; I followed another course in my game: I threw away the knave, and played with the king, *i. e.* with the Regent. After a little preliminary conversation, I turned the conversation on the Abbé.

"Ah, the *scélérat!*" said Philip, smiling, "'t is a sad dog, but very clever and *loves me;* he would be incomparable, if he were but decently honest."

"At least," said I, "he is no hypocrite, and that is some praise."

"Hem!" ejaculated the Duc, very slowly, and then, after a pause, he said, "Count, I have a real kindness for you, and I will therefore give you a piece of advice: think as well of Dubois as you can, and address him as if he were all you endeavoured to fancy him."

After this hint, which in the mouth of any prince but Philip of Orleans would have been not a little remarkable for its want of dignity, my prospects did not seem much brighter: however, I was not discouraged.

"The Abbé," said I, respectfully, "is a choleric man: one *may* displease him; but dare I hope that so long as I preserve inviolate my zeal and my attachment to the interests, and the person of your highness, no—"

The Regent interrupted me. "You mean nobody shall successfully misrepresent you to me. No, Count," (and here the Regent spoke with the earnestness and dignity, which, when he did assume, few wore with a nobler grace)—"no, Count, I make a distinction between those who minister to the state and those who minister to me. I consider your services too valuable to the former, to put them at the mercy of the latter. And now that the conversation has turned upon business, I wish to speak to you about this scheme of *Gortz*."

After a prolonged conference with the Regent upon matters of business, in which his deep penetration into human nature not a little surprised me, I went away, thoroughly satisfied with my visit. I should not have been so, had I added to my other accomplishments the gift of prophecy.

About five days after this interview, I thought it would be but prudent to pay the *Abbé Dubois* one of those visits of homage, which it was already become policy to pay

him. "If I go," thought I, "it will seem as if nothing had happened; if I stay away, it will seem as if I attached importance to a scene I should appear to have forgotten."

It so happened that the Abbé had a very unusual visiter that morning in the person of the austere, but admirable Duc de St. Simon. There was a singular, and almost invariable distinction in the Regent's mind, between one kind of regard and another. His regard for one order of persons always arose either out of his vices or his indolence; his regard for another, out of his good qualities and his strong sense. The Duc de St. Simon held the same place in the latter species of affection, that Dubois did in the former. The Duc was just coming out of the Abbé's closet as I entered the anteroom. He paused to speak to me, while Dubois, who had followed the Duc out, stopped for one moment and surveyed me with a look like a thunder cloud. I did not appear to notice it, but St. Simon did.

"That look," said he, as Dubois, beckoning to a gentleman to accompany him to his closet, once more disappeared, "that look bodes you no good, Count."

Pride is an elevation, which is a spring-board at one time, and a stumbling-block at another. It was with me more often the stumbling-block than the spring-board. "Monseigneur le Duc," said I, haughtily enough, and rather in too loud a tone, considering the chamber was pretty full, "in no court to which Morton Devereux proffers his services, shall his fortune depend upon the looks of a low-born, insolent, or a profligate priest."

St. Simon, who was both very bitter, and very fond of *la haute naissance*, smiled sardonically. "Monsieur le Compte," said he, rather civilly, "I honour your sentiments, and I wish you success in the world, and a lower voice."

I was going to say something by way of retort, for I was in a very bad humour, but I checked myself; "I need not," thought I, "make two enemies, if I can help it."

"I shall never," I replied, gravely, "I shall never despair, so long as the Duc de St. Simon lives, of winning by the same arts the favour of princes and the esteem of good men."

The Duc was flattered, and replied suitably, but he very soon afterward went away. I was resolved that I would not go till I had fairly seen what sort of reception the

Abbé would give me. I did not wait long—he came out of his closet, and standing in his usual rude manner with his back to the fire-place, received the addresses and compliments of his visiters. I was not in a hurry to present myself, but I did so at last with a familiar, yet rather respectful air. Dubois looked at me from head to foot, and abruptly turning his back upon me, said with an oath, to a courtier who stood next to him,—"The plagues of Pharaoh are come again—only instead of Egyptian frogs in our chambers, we have the still more troublesome guests—English adventurers!"

Somehow or other my compliments rarely tell; I am lavish enough of them, but they generally have the air of sarcasms: thank Heaven, however, no one can accuse me of ever wanting a rude answer to a rude speech. "Ha! ha! ha!" said I now, in answer to Dubois, with a courteous laugh, "you have an excellent wit, Abbé. Apropos of adventures, I met a Monsieur St. Laurent, Principal of the Institution of St. Michael, the other day, 'Count,' said he, hearing I was going to Paris, 'you can do me an especial favour!'—'What is it?' said I.—'Why, a cast-off valet of mine is living at Paris—a terrible little scoundrel, who ran off with an old coat of mine. I understand he gives himself great airs, and calls himself an *Abbé*, and a gentleman; but pray, if ever you meet him, give him a good horsewhipping on my account:—his name is William Dubois.'—'Depend upon it,' answered I to Monsieur St. Laurent, 'that if he is servant to any one not belonging to the royal family, I will fulfil your errand, and horsewhip him soundly; if *in* the service of the royal family, why respect for his masters must oblige me to content myself with putting all persons on their guard against a little rascal, who retains, in all situations, the manners of the apothecary's son, and the roguery of the director's valet.'"

All the time I was relating this charming little anecdote, it would have been amusing to the last degree, to note the horrified countenances of the surrounding gentlemen. Dubois was too confounded, too aghast to interrupt me, and I left the room before a single syllable was uttered. Had Dubois at that time been what he was afterward, cardinal and prime minister, I should in all probability have had permanent lodgings in the Bastile, in return for my story. Even as it was, the Abbé was not so grateful as he ought to have been, for my taking so

much pains to amuse him. Despite of my anger on leaving the favourite, I did not forget my prudence, and accordingly I hastened to the prince. When the Regent admitted me, I flung myself on my knee, and told him, verbatim, all that had happened. The Regent, who seems to have had very little real liking for Dubois,* could not help laughing when I ludicrously described to him the universal consternation my anecdote had excited.

"Courage, *mon cher Comte*," said he, kindly, "you have nothing to fear; return home and count upon an embassy!"

I relied on the royal word, returned to my lodgings, and spent the evening with Chaulieu and Fontenelle. The next day the Duc de St. Simon paid me a visit. After a little preliminary conversation, he unburthened the secret with which he was charged. I was desired to leave Paris in forty-eight hours.

"Believe me," said St. Simon, "that this message was not intrusted to me by the Regent, without great reluctance. He sends you many condescending and kind messages; says, he shall always both esteem and like you, and hopes to see you again, some time or other, at the Palais Royal. Moreover, he desires the message to be private, and has intrusted it to me in especial, because hearing that I had a kindness for you, and knowing I had a hatred for Dubois, he thought I should be the least unwelcome messenger of such disagreeable tidings. 'To tell you the truth, St. Simon,' said the Regent, laughing, 'I only consent to have him banished, from a firm conviction, that if I do not, Dubois will take some opportunity of having him beheaded.'"

"Pray," said I, smiling with a tolerable good grace, "pray give my most grateful and humble thanks to his highness, for his very considerate and kind foresight. I could not have chosen better for myself than his highness has chosen for me: my only regret on quitting France is, at leaving a prince so affable as Philip, and a courtier so virtuous as St. Simon."

Though the good Duc went every year to the Abbey de la Trappe, for the purpose of mortifying his sins and preserving his religion, in so impious an atmosphere as

* On the death of Dubois, he wrote to the Count de Nocé, whom he had banished for an indiscreet expression against the favourite, uttered at one of the Regent's private suppers: "With the beast dies the venom: I expect you to-night to supper at the Palais Royal."

the Palais Royal, he was not above flattery; and he expressed himself towards me with particular kindness after my speech.

At court, one becomes a sort of human ant-bear, and learns to catch one's prey by one's tongue.

After we had eased ourselves a little by abusing Dubois, the Duc took his leave in order to allow me time to prepare for my "journey," as he politely called it. Before he left, he however asked me whither my course would be bent? I told him, that I should take my chance with the Czar Peter, and see if his czarship thought the same esteem was due to the disgraced courtier, as to the favoured diplomatist.

That night I received a letter from St. Simon, enclosing one addressed with all due form to the Czar. "You will consider the enclosed," wrote St. Simon, "a fresh proof of the Regent's kindness to you; it is a most flattering testimonial in your favour, and cannot fail to make the Czar anxious to secure your services."

I was not a little touched by this kindness, so unusual in princes to their discarded courtiers, and this entirely reconciled me to a change of scene, which, indeed, under any other circumstances, my somewhat morbid love for action and variety would have induced me rather to relish than dislike.

Within thirty-six hours from the time of dismissal, I had turned my back upon the French capital, and was moralizing most sagely on the observation I made as a preface to this narrative of the causes of my departure, viz. "that there appears very often to be a sort of moral fitness between the beginning and end of certain alliances, or acquaintances." It was indeed meet that the royal favour towards me, that had commenced in a *maison de débauche*, should be terminated by a *fille de joie*.

CHAPTER VI.

A long Interval of Years—a Change of Mind and its Causes.

THE last accounts received of the Czar, had reported him to be at Dantzic. He had, however, quitted that place when I arrived there. I lost no time in following

him, and presented myself to his majesty one day after his dinner, when he was sitting with one leg in the Czarina's lap, and a bottle of the best *eau de vie* before him. I had chosen my time well; he received me most graciously, read my letter from the Regent—about which, remembering the fate of Bellerophon, I had had certain apprehensions, but which proved to be, in the highest degree, complimentary—and then declared himself extremely happy to see me again. However parsimonious Peter generally was towards foreigners, I never had ground for personal complaint on that score. The very next day I was appointed to a post of honour and profit about the royal person; from this I was transferred to a military station, in which I rose with great rapidity; and I was only occasionally called from my warlike duties, to be intrusted with diplomatic missions of the highest confidence and importance.

It is this portion of my life—a portion of nine years, to the time of the Czar's death—that I shall, in this history, the most concentrate and condense. In truth, were I to dwell upon it at length, I should make little more than a mere record of political events—differing, in some respects, it is true, from the received histories of the time, but containing nothing to compensate, in utility, for the want of interest. That this was the exact age for adventurers, Alberoni and Dubois are sufficient proofs. Never was there a more stirring, active, restless period—never one in which the genius of intrigue was so pervadingly at work. I was not less fortunate than my brethren. Although scarcely four and twenty when I entered the Czar's service, my habits of intimacy with men much older—my customary gravity, reserve, and thought—my freedom, since Isora's death, from youthful levity or excess—my early entrance into the world—and a countenance prematurely marked with the lines of reflection, and sobered by its hue—made me appear considerably older than I was. I kept my own counsel, and affected to be so; youth is a great enemy to one's success; and more esteem is often bestowed upon a wrinkled brow than a plodding brain.

All the private intelligence, which, during this space of time, I had received from England, was far from voluminous. My mother still enjoyed the quiet of her religious retreat. A fire, arising from the negligence of a servant, had consumed nearly the whole of Devereux

Court (the fine old house! till that went, I thought even England held one friend). Upon this accident, Gerald had gone to London; and though there was now no doubt of his having been concerned in the Rebellion of 1715, he had been favourably received at court, and was already renowned throughout London for his pleasures, his excesses, and his munificent profusion.

Montreuil, whose lot seemed to be always to lose, by intrigue, what he gained by the real solidity of his genius, had embarked very largely in the rash but gigantic schemes of Gortz and Alberoni; schemes which, had they succeeded, would not only have placed a new king upon the English throne, but wrought an utter change over the whole face of Europe. With Alberoni and with Gortz fell Montreuil. He was banished France and Spain; the penalty of death awaited him in Britain; and he was supposed to have thrown himself into some convent in Italy, where his name and his character were unknown. In this brief intelligence was condensed all my information of the actors in my first scenes of life. I return to that scene on which I had now entered.

At the age of thirty-three, I had acquired a reputation sufficient to content my ambition—my fortune was larger than my wants—I was a favourite in courts—I had been successful in camps—I had already obtained all that would have rewarded the whole lives of many men superior to myself in merit—more ardent than myself in desires. I was still young—my appearance, though greatly altered, manhood had rather improved than impaired I had not forestalled my constitution by excesses, nor worn dry the sources of enjoyment by too large a demand upon their capacities; why was it then at that golden age—in the very prime and glory of manhood—in the very zenith and summer of success—that a deep, dark, pervading melancholy fell upon me? A melancholy so gloomy, that it seemed to me as a thick and impenetrable curtain drawn gradually between myself and the blessed light of human enjoyments. A torpor crept upon me—an indolent, heavy, clinging languor gathered over my whole frame—the physical and the mental: I sat for hours without book, paper, object, thought, gazing on vacancy—stirring not—feeling not—yes, feeling, but feeling only one sensation, a sick, sad, drooping despondency—a sinking in of the heart—a sort of gnawing within, as if something living were twisted round my

vitals, and finding no other food, preyed, though with a sickly and dull maw, upon *them*. This disease came upon me slowly: it was not till the beginning of a second year from its obvious and palpable commencement, that it grew to the height that I have described. It began with a distaste to all that I had been accustomed to enjoy or to pursue. Music, which I had always passionately loved, though from some defect in the organs of hearing, I was incapable of attaining the smallest knowledge of the science, music lost all its diviner spells, all its properties of creating a new existence, a life of dreaming and vague luxuries, within the mind—it became only a monotonous sound, less grateful to the languor of my faculties, than an utter and dead stillness. I had never been what is generally termed a boon companion, but I had had the social vanities, if not the social tastes: I had insensibly loved the board which echoed with applause at my sallies, and the comrades who, while they deprecated my satire, had been complaisant enough to hail it as wit. One of my weaknesses is a love of show, and I had gratified a feeling not the less cherished because it arose from a petty source, in obtaining for my equipages, my mansion, my banquets, the celebrity which is given no less to magnificence than to fame; now I grew indifferent alike to the signs of pomp, and to the baubles of taste—praise fell upon a listless ear, and (rare pitch of satiety!) the pleasures that are the offspring of our foibles, delighted me no more. I had early learned from Bolingbroke a love for the converse of men, eminent, whether for wisdom or for wit; the graceful badinage, or the keen critique—the sparkling flight of the winged words which circled and rebounded from lip to lip, or the deep speculation upon the mysterious and unravelled wonders of man, of nature, and the world—the light maxim upon manners, or the sage inquiry into the mines of learning; all and each had possessed a link to bind my temper and my tastes to the graces and fascination of social life. Now a new spirit entered within me: the smile faded from my lip, and the jest departed from my tongue; memory seemed no less treacherous than fancy, and deserted me the instant I attempted to enter into those contests of knowledge in which I had been not undistinguished before. I grew confused and embarrassed in speech—my words expressed a sense utterly different to that which I had intended to convey,

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and at last, as my apathy increased, I sat at my own board, silent and lifeless, freezing into ice the very powers and streams of converse which I had once been the foremost to circulate and to warm.

At the time I refer to, I was minister at one of the small continental courts, where life is a round of unmeaning etiquette, and wearisome ceremonials, a daily labour of trifles—a ceaseless pageantry of nothings—I had been sent there upon one important event, the business resulting from it had soon ceased, and all the duties that remained for me to discharge were of a negative and passive nature. Nothing that could arouse—nothing that could occupy faculties that had for years been so perpetually wound up to a restless excitation, was left for me in this terrible reservoir of *ennui*. I had come thither at once from the skirmishing and wild warfare of a Tartar foe; a war in which, though the glory was obscure, the action was perpetual and exciting. I had come thither, and the change was as if I had passed from a mountain stream to a stagnant pool.

Society at this court reminded me of a state funeral, every thing was pompous and lugubrious, even to the drapery—even to the feathers—in other scenes consecrated to associations of levity or of grace; the hourly pageant swept on slow, tedious, mournful, and the object of the attendants was only to entomb the pleasure which they affected to celebrate. What a change for the wild, the strange, the novel, the intriguing, the varying life, which, whether in courts or camps, I had hitherto led. The internal change that came over myself, is scarcely to be wondered at; the winds stood still, and the straw they had blown from quarter to quarter, whether in anger or in sport, began to moulder upon the spot where they had left it.

From this cessation of the aims, hopes, and thoughts of life, I was awakened by the spreading, as it were, of another disease—the dead, dull, aching pain at my heart, was succeeded by one acute and intense; the absence of thought gave way to one thought more terrible—more dark—more despairing than any which had haunted me since the first year of Isora's death; and from a numbness and pause, as it were, of existence, existence became too keen and intolerable a sense. I will enter into an explanation.

At the Court of ———, there was an Italian, not un-

celebrated for his wisdom, nor unbeloved for an innocence and integrity of life, rarely indeed to be met with among his countrymen. The acquaintance of this man, who was about fifty years of age, and who was devoted, almost exclusively, to the pursuit of philosophical science, I had sedulously cultivated. His conversation pleased me: his wisdom improved me; and his benevolence, which reminded me of the traits of La Fontaine, it was so infantine, made me incline to love him. Upon the growth of the fearful malady of mind which seized me, I had discontinued my visits and my invitations to the Italian; and Bezoni (so was he called) felt a little offended by my neglect. As soon, however, as he discovered my state of mind, the good man's resentment left him. He forced himself upon my solitude, and would sit by me whole evenings—sometimes without exchanging a word—sometimes with vain attempts to interest, to arouse, or to amuse me.

At last, one evening, it was the era of a fearful suffering to me, our conversation turned upon those subjects which are at once the most important, and the most rarely discussed. We spoke of *religion*. We first talked upon the theology of revealed religion. As Bezoni warmed into candour, I perceived that his doctrines differed from my own, and that he inly disbelieved that divine creed which Christians profess to adore. From a dispute on the ground of faith, we came to one upon the more debateable ground of reason. We turned from the subject of revealed, to that of natural religion; and we entered long and earnestly into that grandest of all earthly speculations—the metaphysical proofs of the immortality of the soul. Again the sentiments of Bezoni were opposed to mine. He was a believer in the dark doctrine which teaches, that man is dust, and that all things are forgotten in the grave. He expressed his opinions with a clearness and precision the more impressive, because totally devoid of cavil and of rhetoric. I listened in silence, but with a deep and most chilling dismay. Even now, I think I see the man as he sat before me, the light of the lamp falling on his high forehead and dark features; even now I think I hear his calm, low voice—the silver voice of his country—stealing to my heart, and withering the only pure and unsullied hope which I yet cherished there.

Bezoni left me, unconscious of the anguish he be-

queathed me, to think over all he had said. I did not sleep, nor even retire to bed. I laid my head upon my hands, and surrendered myself to turbulent, yet intense reflection. Every man who has lived much in the world, and conversed with its various tribes, has, I fear, met with many who, on this momentous subject, profess the same tenets as Bezoni. But he was the first person I had met of that sect, who had evidently thought long and deeply upon the creed he had embraced. He was not a voluptuary, nor a boaster, nor a wit. He had not been misled by the delusions either of vanity or of the senses. He was a man, pure, innocent, modest, full of all tender charities, and meek dispositions towards mankind; it was evidently his interest to believe in a future state: he could have had nothing to fear from it. Not a single passion did he cherish which the laws of another world would have condemned. Add to this, what I have observed before, that he was not a man fond of the display of intellect, or one that brought to the discussions of wisdom, the artillery of wit. He was grave, humble, and self-diffident, beyond all beings. I would have given a kingdom to have found something in the advocate by which I could have condemned the cause: I could not, and I was wretched.

I spent the whole of the next week among my books. I ransacked whatever in my scanty library the theologians had written, or the philosophers had bequeathed upon that mighty secret. I arranged their arguments in my mind. I armed myself with their weapons. I felt my heart spring joyously within me as I felt the strength I had acquired, and I sent to the philosopher to visit me, that I might conquer and confute him. He came: but he spoke with pain and reluctance. He saw that I had taken the matter far more deeply to heart than he could have supposed it possible in a courtier, and a man of fortune and the world. Little did he know of me or my secret soul. I broke down his reserve at last. I unrolled my arguments. I answered his, and we spent the whole night in controversy. He left me, and I was more bewildered than ever.

To speak truth, he had devoted years to the subject: I had devoted only a week. He had come to his conclusions step by step; he had reached the great ultimatum with slowness, with care, and, he confessed, with anguish and reluctance. What a match was I, who

brought a hasty temper, and a limited reflection, on that subject, to a reasoner like this? His candour staggered and chilled me even more than his logic. Arguments that occurred not to me upon my side of the question, *he* stated at length, and with force; I heard, and till he replied to them I deemed they were unanswerable—the reply came, and I had no counterword. A meeting of this nature was often repeated; and when he left me, tears crept into my wild eyes, and my heart melted within me, and I wept!

I must now enter more precisely than I have yet done into my state of mind upon religious matters at the time this dispute with the Italian occurred. To speak candidly, I had been far less shocked with his opposition to me upon matters of doctrinal faith, than with that upon matters of abstract reasoning. Bred a Catholic, though pride, consistency, custom, made me externally adhere to my sect, I inly perceived its errors, and smiled at its superstitions. And in the busy world, where so little but present objects, or *human* anticipations of the future, engross the attention, I had never given the subject that consideration, which would have (as it has since) enabled me to separate the dogmas of the priest from the precepts of the Saviour, and thus confirmed my belief as the Christian, by the very means which would have loosened it as the Sectarian. So that at the time Bezoni knew me, a certain indifference to—perhaps arising from an ignorance of—doctrinal points, rendered me little hurt by arguments against opinions which I embraced indeed, but with a lukewarm and imperfect affection. But it was far otherwise upon abstract points of reasoning, far otherwise when the hope of surviving this frail and most unhallowed being was to be destroyed. I might have been indifferent to cavil upon *what* was the word of God, but never to question of the justice of God himself. In the whole world, there was not a more *ardent* believer in our imperishable nature, nor one more deeply interested in the belief. Do not let it be supposed that because I have not often recurred to Isora's death, [or because I have continued my history in a jesting and light tone,] that that event ever passed from the memory which it had turned to bitterness and gall. Never, in the mazes of intrigue, in the festivals of pleasure, in the tumults of ambition, in the blaze of a licentious court, or by the rude tents of a barbarous host,—never, my buried love,

had I forgotten thee! That remembrance, had no other cause existed, would have led me to God. Every night, in whatever toils or objects, whatever failures or triumphs the day had been consumed,—every night, before I laid my head upon my widowed and lonely pillow, I had knelt down, and lifted my heart to Heaven, blending the hopes of that heaven with the memory and the vision of Isora. Prayer had seemed to me a commune not only with the living God, but with the dead by whom His dwelling is surrounded. Pleasant and soft was it to turn to one thought, to which all the holiest portions of my nature clung, between the wearying acts of this hard and harsh drama of existence. Even the bitterness of Isora's early and unavenged death passed away, when I thought of the heaven to which she was gone, and in which, though I journeyed now through sin and travail, and recked little if the paths of others differed from my own, I yet trusted, with a solemn trust, that I should meet her at last. There was I to requite her woes---there was I to reward her devotion---there was I to merit her with a love as undying, and at length as pure as her own. It was this that at the stated hour in which, after my prayer to God for our reunion, I surrendered my spirit to the bright and wild visions of her far, but *not impassable* home,---it was this, which for that single hour made all around me a paradise of delighted thoughts! It was not the little earth, nor the cold sky, nor the changing wave, nor the perishable turf---no, nor the dead wall, and the narrow chamber which were round me then! No dreamer ever was so far from the localities of flesh and life, as I was in that enchanted hour: a light seemed to settle upon all things round me; her voice murmured on my ear, her kisses melted on my brow; I shut my eyes, and I fancied that I beheld her!

Wherefore was this comfort?---whence came the spell which admitted me to this fairy land? What was the source of the hope, and the rapture, and the delusion? Was it not the deep certainty that *Isora yet existed*, that her spirit, her nature, her love were preserved, were inviolate, were the same? That they watched over me yet, that she knew that in that hour I was with her---that she felt my prayer---that even then she anticipated the moment when my soul should burst the human prison-house, and be once more blended with her own?

What! and was this to be no more?---were those

mystic and sweet revealings to be mute to me for ever? Were my thoughts of Isora to be henceforth bounded to the charnel house and the worm?---was she, indeed, *no more? No more,*---O, intolerable despair!---Why, there was not a thing I had once known, not a dog that I had caressed, not a book that I had read, which I could know that I should see *no more*, and, knowing, not feel something of regret. No more! were we, indeed, parted for ever and for ever? Had she gone in her young years, with her warm affections, her new hopes, all green and unwithered at her heart, at once into dust, stillness, ice? And had I known her only for one year, one little year, to see her torn from me by a violent and bloody death, and to be left a mourner in this vast and eternal charnel, without a solitary consolation or a gleam of hope? Was the earth to be henceforth a mere mass conjured from the bones, and fattened by the clay of our dead sires?---were the stars and the moon to be mere atoms and specks of a chill light, no longer worlds, which the ardent spirit might hereafter reach, and be fitted to enjoy? Was the heaven, the tender, blue, loving heaven, in whose far regions I had dreamed was Isora's home, and had, therefore, grown better and happier when I gazed upon it, to be nothing but cloud and air? And had the love, which had seemed so immortal, and so springing from that which had not blended itself with mortality, been but a gross lamp fed only by the properties of a brute nature, and placed in a dark cell of clay, to glimmer, to burn, and to expire with the frail walls which it had illumined? Dust, death, worms,---were these all our heritage, all the heritage of love and hope, of thought, of passion, of all that breathed, and kindled, and exalted, and *created* within?

Could I contemplate this idea, could I believe it possible? *I could not.* But against the abstract, the logical arguments for that idea---had I a reply? I shudder as I write that at *that* time I had not! I endeavoured to fix my whole thoughts to the study of those subtle reasonings which I had hitherto so imperfectly conned; but my mind was jarring, irresolute, bewildered, confused, my stake seemed too vast to allow me coolness for the game.

Whoever has had cause for some refined and deep study in the midst of the noisy and loud world, may perhaps readily comprehend that feeling which now possessed me, a feeling that it was utterly impossible to

abstract and concentrate one's thoughts, while at the mercy of every intruder, and fevered and fretful by every disturbance. Men, early and long accustomed to mingle such reflections with the avocations of courts and cities, have grown callous to these interruptions, and it has been in the very heart of the multitude, that the profoundest speculations have been cherished and produced; but I was not of this mould. The world which before had been distasteful, now grew insufferable; I longed for some seclusion, some utter solitude, some quiet and unpenetrated nook, that I might give my undivided mind to the knowledge of these things, and build the tower of divine reasonings by which I might ascend to Heaven. It was at this time, and in the midst of my fiercest internal conflict, that the great Czar died, and I was suddenly recalled to Russia. "Now," I said, when I heard of my release, "now shall my wishes be fulfilled."

I sent to Bezoni. He came, but he refused, as indeed he had for some time done, to speak to me further upon the question which so wildly engrossed me. "I forgive you," said I, when we parted, "I forgive you for all that you have cost me; I feel that the moment is now at hand when my faith shall frame a weapon wherewith to triumph over yours!"

Father in Heaven! thanks be to thee, that my words were true! thanks be to thee that my doubts were at last removed, and the cloud rolled away from my soul.

Bezoni embraced me, and wept over me. "All good men," said he, "have a mighty interest in your success; for me there is nothing dark, even in the mute grave, if it covers the ashes of one who has loved and served his brethren, and done, with a wilful heart, no living creature wrong."

Soon afterward the Italian lost his life in attending the victims of a fearful and contagious disease, whom even the regular practitioners of the healing art hesitated to visit.

At this moment I am, in the strictest acceptation of the words, a believer and a Christian. I have neither anxiety nor doubt upon the noblest and the most comforting of all creeds, and I am grateful among the other blessings which Faith has brought me—I am grateful that it has brought me CHARITY. Dark to all human beings was Bezoni's doctrine—dark, above all, to those who have mourned on earth—so withering to all the hopes which

cling the most enduringly to the heart, was his unhappy creed—that he who knows how inseparably, though insensibly, our moral legislation is woven with our supposed self-interest, will scarcely marvel at, even while he condemns, the unwise and unholy persecution which that creed universally sustains? Many a most wretched hour, many a pang of agony and despair, did those doctrines inflict upon myself; but I know that the intention of Bezoni was benevolence, and that the practice of his life was virtue: and while my reason tells me that God will not punish the reluctant and involuntary error of one, to whom all God's creatures were so dear, my religion bids me hope that I shall meet him in that world where no error *is*, and where the Great Spirit, to whom all human passions are unknown, avenges the momentary doubt of His justice, by a proof of the infinity of His mercy.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

The Retreat.

I ARRIVED at St. Petersburgh, and found the Czarina, whose conjugal perfidy was more than suspected, tolerably resigned to the extinction of that dazzling life, whose incalculable and godlike utility, it is reserved for posterity to appreciate, I had almost said, to adore! I have observed, by the way, that, in general, men are the less mourned by their families, in proportion as they are the more mourned by the community. The great are seldom amiable; and those who are the least lenient to our errors, are invariably our relations!

Many circumstances at that time conspired to make my request to quit the imperial service appear natural and appropriate. The death of the Czar, joined to a growing jealousy and suspicion between the English monarch and Russia, which, though long existing, was now become more evident and notorious than heretofore, gave me full opportunity to observe, that my pardon had been obtained from George I. three years since, and that private as well as national ties, rendered my return to England a measure not only of expediency but necessity. The imperial Catherine granted me my dismissal in the most flattering terms, and added the high distinction of the order founded in honour of the memorable feat by which she had saved her royal consort and the Russian army, to the order of St. Andrew, which I had already received.

I transferred my wealth, become immense, to England, and, with the pomp which became the rank and reputation which fortune had bestowed upon me, I commenced the long land journey I had chalked out to myself. Although I had alleged my wish to revisit England as the main reason of my retirement from Russia, I had also expressed an intention of visiting and making a short *séjour* in Italy, previous to my return to England. The

physicians, indeed, had recommended to me that delicious climate, as an antidote to the ills my constitution had sustained in the freezing skies of the north; and in my own heart I had secretly appointed some more solitary part of the Divine Land for the scene of my purposed hermitage and seclusion. It is indeed astonishing, how those who have lived much in cold climates, yearn for lands of mellow light and summer luxuriance; and I felt for a southern sky the same resistless longing which sailors, in the midst of the vast ocean, have felt for the green fields and various landscapes of the shore.

I traversed, then, the immense tracts of Russia—passed through Hungary—entered 'Furkey, which I had wished to visit, and where I remained a short time; and, crossing the Adriatic, hailed, for the first time, the Ausonian shore. It was the month of May—that month, of whose lustrous beauty none in a northern clime can dream—that I entered Italy. It may serve as an instance of the power with which a thought that, however important, is generally deemed of two abstract and metaphysical a nature deeply to engross the mind, possessed me then, that I—no cold nor unenthusiastic votary of the classic muse—made no pilgrimage to city or ruin, but, after a brief sojourn at Ravenna, where I dismissed all my train, set out alone to find the solitary cell, for which I now sickened with a hermit's love.

It was at a small village at the foot of the Apennines that I found the object of my search. Strangely enough, there blended with my philosophical ardour, a deep mixture of my old romance. Nature, to whose voice the dweller in cities, and struggler with mankind, had been so long obtuse, now pleaded audibly at my heart, and called me to her embraces, as a mother calls unto her wearied child. My eye, as with a new vision, became opened to the mute yet eloquent loveliness of this most fairy earth—and hill and valley—the mirror of silent waters. The sunny stillness of woods, and the old haunts of satyr and nymph—revived in me the fountains of past poetry, and became the receptacles of a thousand spells, mightier than the charms of any enchanter save Love—which was departed—Youth, which was nearly gone—and Nature, which, (more vividly than ever) existed for me still.

I chose, then, my retreat. As I was fastidious in its choice, I cannot refrain from the luxury of des · bing it.

Ah, little did I dream that I had come thither, not only to find a divine comfort, but the sources of a human and most passionate wo! Mightiest of the Roman bards! in whom tenderness and reason were so entwined, and who didst sanctify even thine unholy errors, with so beautiful and rare a genius! what an invariable truth one line of thine has expressed: *Even in the fairest fountain of delight, there is a secret and evil spring eternally bubbling up, and scattering its bitter waters over the very flowers which surround its margin!*

In the midst of a little and most glossy vale was a small cottage; that was my home. The good people there performed for me all the hospitable offices I required. At a neighbouring monastery I had taken the precaution to make myself known to the superior. Not all Italians—no, nor all monks—belong to either of the two great tribes into which they were generally divided—knaves or fools. The Abbot Anselmo was a man of rather a liberal and enlarged mind; he not only kept my secret, which was necessary to my peace, but he took my part, which was, perhaps, necessary to my safety. A philosopher, who desires only to convince himself, and upon one subject, does not require many books. Truth lies in a small compass; and, for my part, in considering any speculative subject, I would sooner have with me one book of Euclid, as a model, than all the Vatican, as authorities. But then I am not fond of drawing upon any resources but those of reason for reasonings; wiser men than I am, are not so strict. The few books that I did require, were, however, of a nature very illicit in Italy; the good father passed them to me from Ravenna, under his own protection. "I was a holy man," he said, "who wished to render the Catholic church a great service, by writing a vast book against certain atrocious opinions; and the works I read were, for the most part, works that I was about to confute." This report gained me protection and respect; and, after I had ordered my agent at Ravenna to forward the excellent abbot a piece of plate, and a huge cargo of a rare Hungary wine, it was not the abbot's fault if I was not the most popular person in the neighbourhood.

But to my description:—my home was a cottage—the valley in which it lay was divided by a mountain stream, which came from the forest Apennine, a sparkling and wild stranger, and softened into quiet and calm as it pro-

ceeded through its green margin in the vale. And that margin, how dazzingly green it was! At the distance of about a mile from my hut, the stream was broken into a slight waterfall, whose sound was heard distinct and deep in that still place: and often I paused from my midnight thoughts, to listen to its enchanted and wild melody. The fall was unseen by the ordinary wanderer, for there the stream passed through a thick copse; and, even when you pierced the grove, and gained the waterside, dark trees hung over the turbulent wave, and the silver spray was thrown upward through the leaves, and fell in diamonds upon the deep green sod.

This was a most favoured haunt with me; the sun, glancing through the idle leaves—the music of the water—the solemn absence of all other sounds, except the songs of birds, to which the ear grew accustomed, and, at last, in the abstraction of thought, scarcely distinguished from the silence—the fragrant herbs—and the unnumbered and nameless flowers which formed my couch—were all calculated to make me pursue, uninterruptedly, the thread of contemplation which I had, in the less voluptuous and harsher solitude of the closet, first woven from the web of austerest thought. I say pursue, for it was too luxurious and sensual a retirement for the conception of a rigid and severe train of reflection; at least it would have been so to me. But, when the thought *is once born*, such scenes seem to me the most fit to cradle and to rear it. The torpor of the physical, appears to leave to the mental frame, a full scope and power; the absence of human cares, sounds, and intrusions, becomes the best nurse to contemplation; and even that delicious and vague sense of enjoyment, which would seem, at first, more genial to the fancy than the mind, preserves the thought undisturbed, because contented; so that all but the scheming mind becomes lapped in sleep, and the mind itself lives distinct and active as a dream;—a dream, not vague, nor confused, nor unsatisfying, but endowed with more than the clearness, the precision, the vigour, of waking life.

A little way from this waterfall was a fountain, a remnant of a classic and golden age. Never did Naiad gaze in a more glassy mirror, or dwell in a more divine retreat. Through a crevice in an overhanging mound of the emerald earth, the father stream of the fountain crept out, born, like Love, among flowers, and in the most

sunny smiles; it then fell broadening and glowing, into a marble basin, at whose bottom, in the shining noon, you might see a soil which mocked the very hues of gold, and the water insects, in their quaint shapes and unknown sports, grouping or gliding in the midmost wave. A small temple, of the lightest architecture, stood before the fountain; and, in a niche therein, a mutilated statue —possibly of the Spirit of the place. By this fountain, my evening walk would linger till the short twilight melted away, and the silver wave trembled in the light of the western star. Oh! then, what feelings gathered over me as I turned slowly homeward; the air still, breathless, shining—the stars, gleaming over the woods of the far Apennine—the hills, growing huger in the shade—the small insects humming on the wing—and, ever and anon, the swift bat, wheeling round and amidst them—the music of the waterfall deepening on the ear; and the light and hour lending even a mysterious charm to the cry of the weird owl, flitting after its prey,—all this had a harmony in my thoughts, and a food for the meditations in which my days and nights were consumed. The World moulders away the fabric of our early nature, and Solitude rebuilds it on a firmer base.

CHAPTER II.

The Victory.

O Earth! reservoir of life, over whose deep bosom brood the wings of the Universal Spirit, shaking upon thee a blessing and a power—a blessing and a power to produce and reproduce the living from the dead, so that our flesh is woven from the same atoms which were once the atoms of our sires, and the inexhaustible nutriment of existence is decay! O eldest and most solemn earth, blending even thy loveliness and joy with a terror and an awe! thy sunshine is girt with clouds, and circled with storm and tempest: thy day cometh from the womb of darkness, and returneth unto darkness as man returns unto thy bosom. The green herb that laughs in the valley; the water that sings merrily along the

wood; the many winged and all searching air, which garners life as a harvest, and scatters it as a seed; all are pregnant with corruption, and carry the cradled death within them, as an oak banqueteth the destroying worm. But who that looks upon thee, and loves thee, and inhales thy blessings, will ever mingle too deep a moral with his joy? Let us not ask whence come the garlands that we wreathe around our altars, or shower upon our feast: will they not bloom as brightly, and breathe with as rich a fragrance, whether they be plucked from the garden or the grave? O earth, my mother earth! dark sepulchre that closes upon all which the flesh bears, but vestibule of the vast regions which the soul shall pass, how leaped my heart within me when I first fathomed thy real spell!

Yes! never shall I forget the rapture with which I hailed the light that dawned upon me at last! Never shall I forget the suffocating---the full---the ecstatic joy, with which I saw the mightiest of all human hopes accomplished; and felt, as if an angel spoke, that there is a life beyond the grave! Tell me not of the pride of ambition—tell me not of the triumphs of science: never had ambition so lofty an end as the search after immortality! never had science so sublime a triumph, as the conviction that immortality will be gained! I had been at my task the whole night,—pale alchymist, seeking from meaner truths to extract the greatest of all! At the first hour of day, lo! the gold was there: the labour, for which I would have relinquished life, was accomplished; the dove descended upon the waters of my soul. I fled from the house. I was possessed as with a spirit. I ascended a hill, which looked for leagues over the sleeping valley. A gray mist hung around me like a veil; I paused, and the great Sun broke slowly forth; I gazed upon its majesty, and my heart swelled. "So rises the soul," I said, "from the vapours of this dull being; but the soul waneth not, neither setteth it, nor knoweth it any night, save that from which it dawneth!"—The mists rolled gradually away, the sunshine deepened, and the face of nature lay in smiles, yet silently, before me. It lay before me, a scene that I had often witnessed, and hailed, and worshipped; *but it was not the same*: a glory had passed over it; it was steeped in a beauty and a holiness, in which neither youth, nor poetry, nor even love, had ever robed it before! The change which the

earth had undergone, was like that of some being we have loved—*when death is past, and from a mortal it become an angel!*

I uttered a cry of joy, and was then as silent as all around me. I felt as if henceforth there was a new compact between Nature and myself. I felt as if every tree, and blade of grass, were henceforth to be eloquent with a voice, and instinct with a spell. I felt as if a religion had entered into the earth, and made oracles of all that the earth bears; the old fables of Dodona were to become realized, and *the very leaves* to be hallowed by a sanctity, and to murmur with a truth. I was no longer only a part of that which withers and decays; I was no longer a machine of clay, moved by a spring, and to be trodden into the mire which I had trod; I was no longer tied to humanity by links which could never be broken, and which, if broken, would avail me not. I was become, as by a miracle, a part of a vast, though unseen spirit. It was not to the matter, but to the essences of things, that I bore kindred and alliance; the stars and the heavens resumed over me their ancient influence; and as I looked along the far hills and the silent landscape, a voice seemed to swell from the stillness, and to say, "I am the life of these things, a spirit distinct from the things themselves. It is to me that you belong for ever and for ever; separate, but equally indissoluble; apart, but equally eternal!"

I spent the day upon the hills. It was evening when I returned. I lingered by the old fountain, and saw the stars rise, and tremble, one by one, upon the wave. The hour was that which Isora had loved the best, and that which the love of her had consecrated the most to me. And never, oh, never, did it sink into my heart with a deeper sweetness, or a more soothing balm. I had once more knit my soul to Isora's: I could once more look from the toiling and the dim earth, and forget that Isora had left me in dreaming of our reunion. Blame me not, you who indulge in a religious hope more severe and more sublime—you who miss no footsteps from the earth, nor pine for a voice that your human wanderings can hear no more—blame me not, you whose pulses beat not for the wild love of the created, but whose spirit languishes only for a nearer commune with the Creator—blame me not too harshly for my mortal wishes, nor think that my faith was the less sincere because it was

tinted in the most unchanging dyes of the human heart, and indissolubly woven with the memory of the dead. Often from our weaknesses our strongest principles of conduct are born; and from the acorn which a breeze has wafted, springs the oak which defies the storm.

The first intoxication and rapture consequent upon the reward of my labour passed away; but, unlike other excitation, it was followed not by languor, or a sated and torpid calm; a soothing and delicious sensation possessed me—my turbulent senses slept; and Memory recalling the world, rejoiced at the retreat which Hope had acquired.

I now surrendered myself to a nobler philosophy than in crowds and cities I had hitherto known. I no longer satirized—I inquired; I no longer derided—I examined. I looked from the natural proofs of immortality to the written promise of our Father—I sought not to baffle men, but to worship truth—I applied myself more to the knowledge of good and evil—I bowed my soul before the loveliness of Virtue; and though scenes of wrath and passion yet lowered in the future, and I was again speedily called forth—to act—to madden—to contend—perchance to sin—the Image is still unbroken, and the Votary has still an offering for its Altar.

CHAPTER III.

The Hermit of the Well.

THE thorough and deep investigation of those principles from which we learn the immortality of the soul, and the nature of its proper ends, leads the mind through such a course of reflection and of study—it is attended with so many exalting, purifying, and, if I may so say, etherealizing thoughts, that I do believe no man has ever pursued it, and not gone back to the world a better and a nobler man than he was before. Nay, so deeply must these elevating and refining studies be conned, so largely and sensibly must they enter the intellectual system, that I firmly think that even a sensualist who has only considered the subject with a view to convince himself

that he is clay, and has therefore an excuse to the curious conscience for his grosser desires; nay, should he come to his wished-for yet desolate conclusion, from which the abhorrent nature shrinks and recoils, I do nevertheless firmly think, should the study have been long and deep, that he would wonder to find his desires had lost their poignancy, and his objects their charm. He would descend from the Alp he had climbed, to the low level on which he formerly deemed it a bliss to dwell, with the feeling of one who, having long drawn in high places an empyreal air, has become unable to inhale the smoke and the thick vapour he inhaled of yore. His soul once aroused would stir within him, though he felt it not, and though he grew not a believer, he would cease to be only the voluptuary.

I meant at one time to have here stated the arguments which had perplexed me on one side and those which afterward convinced me on the other. I do not do so for many reasons, one of which will suffice, viz. the evident and palpable circumstance that a dissertation of that nature would, in a biography like the present, be utterly out of place and season. Perhaps, however, at a later period of life, I may collect my own opinions on the subject into a separate work, and bequeathe that work to future generations, upon the same conditions as the present memoir.

One day I was favoured by a visit from one of the monks at the neighbouring abbey. After some general conversation, he asked me if I had yet encountered the Hermit of the Well?" "No," said I, "and I was going to add, that I have not even heard of him, but I now remember that the good people of the house have more than once spoken to me of him as a rigid and self-mortifying recluse."

"Yes," said the holy friar; "Heaven forbid that I should say aught against the practice of the saints and pious men, to deny unto themselves the lusts of the flesh; but such penances may be carried too far. However, it is an excellent custom, and the Hermit of the Well is an excellent creature. *Sancta Maria!* what delicious stuff is that Hungary wine your scholarship was pleased to bestow upon our father Abbot. He suffered me to taste it the eve before last. I had been suffering with a pain in the reins, and the wine acted powerfully upon me as an efficacious and inestimable medicine. Do you find,

my son, that it bore the journey to your lodging here, as well as it bore it to the convent cellars?"

"Why, really, my father, I have none of it here; but the people of the house have a few flasks of a better wine than ordinary, if you will deign to taste it in lieu of the Hungary wine."

"Oh—oh!" said the monk, groaning, "my reins trouble me much—perhaps the wine may comfort me!" and the wine was brought.

"It is not of so rare a flavour as that you sent to our reverend father," said the monk, wiping his mouth with his long sleeve. "Hungary must be a charming place—is it far from hence?—It joins the heretical—I pray your pardon—it joins the continent of England, I believe?"

"Not exactly, father; but whatever its topography, it is a rare country—for those who like it! But tell me of this Hermit of the Well. How long has he lived here—and how came he by his appellation? Of what country is he—and of what birth?"

"You ask me too many questions at once, my son. The country of the holy man is a mystery to us all. He speaks the Tuscan dialect well, but with a foreign accent. Nevertheless, though the wine is not of Hungary, it has a pleasant flavour. I wonder how the rogues kept it so snugly from the knowledge and comfort of their pious brethren of the monastery."

"And how long has the hermit lived in your vicinity?"

"Nearly eight years, my son. It was one winter's evening that he came to our convent in the dress of a worldly traveller, to seek our hospitality, and a shelter for the night, which was inclement and stormy. He stayed with us a few days, and held some conversation with our father Abbot; and one morning, after roaming in the neighbourhood to look at the old stones and ruins, which is the custom of travellers, he returned, put into our poor-box some certain alms, and two days afterward he appeared in the place he now inhabits, and in the dress he assumes."

"And of what nature, my father, is the place, and of what fashion the dress?"

"Holy St. Francis!" exclaimed the father, with a surprise so great, that I thought at first it related to the wine, "Holy St. Francis—have you not seen the well yet?"

"No, father, unless you speak of the fountain about a mile and a quarter distant."

"Tush—tush!" said the good man, "what ignoramuses you travellers are; you affect to know what kind of slippers Prester John wears, and to have been admitted to the bed-chamber of *the Pagoda of China;* and yet, when one comes to sound you, you are as ignorant of every thing a man of real learning knows, as an Englishman is of his missal. Why, I thought that every fool in every country had heard of the Holy Well of St. Francis, situated exactly two miles from our famous convent, and that every fool in the neighbourhood had seen it."

"What the fools, my father, whether in this neighbourhood or any other, may have heard or seen, I, who profess not ostensibly to belong to so goodly an order, cannot pretend to know; but be assured, that the Holy Well of St. Francis is as unfamiliar to me, as the Pagoda of China—God bless *him*—is to you."

Upon this, the learned monk, after expressing due astonishment, offered to show it to me; and as I thought I might, by acquiescence, get rid of him the sooner, and as, moreover, I wished to see the Abbot, to whom some books for me had been lately sent, I agreed to the offer.

The well, said the monk, lay not above a mile out of the customary way to the monastery; and after *we* had finished the flask of wine, we sallied out on our excursion,—the monk upon a stately and strong ass—myself on foot.

The Abbot had, on granting me his friendship and protection, observed that I was not the only stranger and recluse on whom his favour was bestowed. He had then mentioned the Hermit of the Well, as an eccentric and strange being, who lived an existence of rigid penance, harmless to others, painful only to himself. This story had been confirmed in the few conversations I had ever interchanged with my host and hostess, who seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in talking of the Solitary; and from them I had heard also many anecdotes of his charity towards the poor, and his attention to the sick. All these circumstances came into my mind as the good monk indulged his loquacity upon the subject, and my curiosity became at last somewhat excited respecting my fellow recluse.

I now learned from the monk, that the post of Hermit of the Well, was an office, of which the present anchorite was by no means the first tenant. The well was one of those springs frequent in Catholic countries, to which a

legend and a sanctity are attached; and twice a year, once in the spring, once in the autumn, the neighbouring peasants flocked thither, on a stated day, to drink, and lose their diseases. As the spring most probably did possess some medicinal qualities, a few extraordinary cures had occurred; especially among those pious persons who took not biennial, but constant draughts, and to doubt its holiness was downright heresy.

Now, hard by this well was a cavern, which, whether first formed by nature or art, was now, upon the whole, constructed into a very commodious abode; and here, for years beyond the memory of man, some solitary person had fixed his abode, to dispense and to bless the water, to be exceedingly well fed by the surrounding peasants, to wear a long gown of serge or sackcloth, and to be called the Hermit of the Well. So fast as this personage died, there were enough candidates eager to supply his place; for it was no bad *métier* to some pennyless impostor to become the quack and patentee of a holy specific. The choice of these candidates always rested with the superior of the neighbouring monastery; and it is not impossible that he made an indifferently good per centage upon the annual advantages of his protection and choice.

At the time the traveller appeared, the former hermit had just departed this life, and it was, therefore, to the vacancy thus occasioned, that he had procured himself to be elected. The incumbent appeared quite of a different mould from the former occupants of the hermitage. He accepted, it is true, the gifts laid at regular periods upon a huge stone between the hermitage and the well, but he distributed among the donors, alms, far more profitable than their gifts. He entered no village, borne upon an ass laden with twin sacks, for the purpose of sanctimoniously robbing the inhabitants; no profane songs were ever heard resounding from his dwelling by the peasant incautiously lingering at a late hour too near its vicinity; my guide, the monk, complained bitterly of his unsociability, and no scandalous legend of nymph-like comforters and damsel visitants, haunting the sacred dwelling, escaped from the garrulous friar's well-loaded budget.

"Does he study much?" said I, with the interest of a student.

"I fear me not," quoth the monk. "I have had occasion often to enter his abode, and I have examined all things with a close eye—for praised be the Lord, I have

faculties more than ordinarily clear and observant—but I have seen no books therein, excepting a missal, and a Latin or Greek Testament, I know not well which;—nay, so incurious or unlearned is the holy man, that he rejected even a loan of the 'Life of St. Francis,' notwithstanding it has many and rare pictures, to say nothing of its most interesting and amazing tales."

More might the monk have said, had we not now suddenly entered a thick and sombre wood. A path cut through it, was narrow, and only capable of admitting a traveller on foot or horseback; and the boughs over head were so darkly interlaced that the light scarcely, and only in broken and erratic glimmerings, pierced the canopy.

"It is the wood," said the monk, crossing himself, "wherein the wonderful adventure happened to St. Francis, which I will one day narrate at length to you."

"And we are near the well, I suppose?" said I.

"It is close at hand," answered the monk.

In effect we had not proceeded above fifty yards before the path brought us into a circular space of green sod, in the midst of which was a small square stone building, of plain but not inelegant shape, and evidently of great antiquity. At one side of this building was an iron handle, for the purpose of raising water, which cast itself into a stone basin, to which was affixed, by a strong chain, an iron cup. An inscription, in monkish Latin, was engraved over the basin, requesting the traveller to pause and drink, and importing that what that water was to the body, faith was to the soul; near the cistern was a rude seat, formed by the trunk of a tree. The door of the well-house was of iron, and secured by a chain and lock; perhaps the pump was so contrived that only a certain quantum of the sanctified beverage could be drawn up at a time, without application to some mechanism within: and wayfarers were thereby prevented from helping themselves *ad libitum*, and thus depriving the anchorite of the profit and the necessity of his office.

It was certainly a strange, lonely, and wild place; the green sward round as a fairy ring, and in the midst of trees, which, black, close, and huge, circled it like a wall; and the solitary gray building in the centre, gaunt and cold, and startling the eye with the abruptness of its appearance, and the strong contrast made by its wan hues to the dark verdure and forest gloom around it!

I took a draught of the water, which was very cold and

tasteless, and reminded the monk of his disorder in the reins, to which a similar potation might possibly be efficacious. To this suggestion the monk answered, that he would certainly try the water some other time; but that at present the wine he had drunk might pollute its divine properties. So saying, he turned off the conversation by inviting me to follow him to the hermitage. In our way thither he pointed out a large fragment of stone, and observed that the water would do me evil instead of good if I forgot to remunerate its guardian. I took the hint, and laid a piece of silver on the fragment.

A short journey through the wood brought us to the foot of a hill, covered with trees, and having at its base a strong stone door, the entrance to the excavated home of the anchorite. The monk gently tapped thrice at this door, but no answer came. "The holy man is from home," said he, "let us return."

We did so; and the monk, keeping behind me, managed, as he thought, unseen, to leave the stone as naked as we had found it. We now struck through another path in the wood, and were soon at the convent. I did not lose the opportunity to question the abbot respecting his tenant: I learned from him little more than the particulars I have already narrated, save that in concluding his details, he said,

"I can scarcely doubt but that the hermit is, like yourself, a person of rank; his bearing and his mien appear to denote it. He has given, and gives yearly, large sums to the uses of the convent; and though he takes the customary gifts of the pious villagers, it is only by my advice, and for the purpose of avoiding suspicion. Should he be considered rich, it might attract cupidity; and there are enough bold hands and sharp knives in the country to place the wealthy and the unguarded in some peril. Whoever he may be,—for he has not confided his secret to me—I do not doubt but that he is doing penance for some great crime; and, whatever be the crime, I suspect that its earthly punishment is nearly over. The hermit is naturally of a delicate and weak frame, and year after year I have marked him sensibly wearing away; so that when I last saw him, three days since, I was shocked at the visible ravages which disease or penance had engraven upon him. If ever Death wrote legibly, his characters are in that brow and cheek."

"Poor man! Know you not even whom to apprise of his decease when he is no more?"

"I do not yet; but the last time I saw him, he told me that he found himself drawing near his end, and that he should not quit life without troubling me with one request."

After this the abbot spoke of other matters, and my visit expired.

Interested in the recluse more deeply than I acknowledged to myself, I found my steps insensibly leading me homeward by the more circuitous road which wound first by the holy well. I did not resist the impulse, but walked musingly onward by the waning twilight, for the day was now over, until I came to the well. As I emerged from the wood I started involuntarily and drew back. A figure, robed from head to foot in a long sable robe, sate upon the rude seat beside the well; sate so still, so motionless, that coming upon it abruptly in that strange place, the heart beat irregularly at an apparition so dark in hue, and so death-like in its repose. The hat, large, broad, and overhanging, which suited the costume, was lying on the ground: and the face, which inclined upward, seemed to woo the gentle air of the quiet and soft skies. I approached a few steps, and saw the profile of the countenance more distinctly than I had done before. It was of a marble whiteness; the features, though sharpened and attenuated by disease, were of surpassing beauty; the hair was exceedingly, almost effeminately long, and hung in waves of perfect jet on either side; the mouth was closed firmly, and deep lines, or rather furrows, were traced from its corners to either nostril. The stranger's beard, of a hue equally black as the hair, was dishevelled and neglected, but not very long; and one hand, which lay on the sable robe, was so thin and wan, you might have deemed the very starlight could have shone through it. I did not doubt that it was the recluse whom I saw; I drew near and accosted him.

"Your blessing, holy father, and your permission to taste the healing of your well."

Sudden as was my appearance, and abrupt my voice, the hermit evinced by no startled gesture a token of surprise. He turned very slowly round, cast upon me an indifferent glance, and said, in a sweet and very low tone,

"You have my blessing, stranger; there is water in the cistern—drink, and be healed."

I dipped the bowl in the basin, and took sparingly of the water. In the accent and tone of the stranger, my ear, accustomed to the dialects of many nations, recognised something English; I resolved, therefore, to address him in my native tongue, rather than the indifferent Italian in which I had first accosted him.

"The water is fresh and cooling; would, holy father, that it could penetrate to a deeper malady than the ills of flesh: that it could assuage the fever of the heart, or lave from the wearied mind the dust which it gathers from the mire and travail of the world."

Now the hermit testified surprise; but it was slight and momentary. He gazed upon me more attentively than he had done before, and said, after a pause,

"My countryman! and in this spot! It is not often that the English penetrate into places where no ostentatious celebrity dwells to sate curiosity and flatter pride. My countryman!—it is well, and perhaps fortunate. Yes," he said, after a second pause, "yes; it were indeed a boon, had the earth a fountain for the wounds which fester, and the disease which consumes within."

"The earth has oblivion, father, if not a cure."

"It is false!" cried the hermit, passionately, and starting wildly from his seat; "the earth has *no* oblivion. The grave—is *that* forgetfulness? No, no—*there is no grave for the soul!* The deeds pass—the flesh corrupts—but the memory passes not, and withers not. From age to age, from world to world, through eternity, throughout creation, it is perpetuated—an immortality—a curse—*a hell!*"

Surprised by the vehemence of the hermit, I was still more startled by the agonizing and ghastly expression of his face.

"My father," said I, "pardon me, if I have pressed upon a sore. I also have that within which, did a stranger touch it, would thrill my whole frame with torture, and I would fain ask from your holy soothing, and pious comfort, something of alleviation or of fortitude."

The hermit drew near to me; he laid his thin hand upon my arm, and looked long and wistfully in my face. It was then that a suspicion crept through me which after observation proved to be true, that the wandering of those dark eyes, and the meaning of that blanched brow were tinctured with insanity.

"Brother, and fellow man," said he, mournfully, "hast thou in truth suffered? and dost thou still smart at the remembrance? We are friends then. If thou hast suffered as much as I have, I will fall down and do homage to thee as a superior; for pain has its ranks, and I think, at times, that none ever climbed the height that I have done. Yet you look not like one who has had nights of delirium, and days in which the heart lay in the breast, as a corpse endowed with consciousness might lie in the grave, feeling the worm gnaw it, and the decay corrupt, and yet incapable of resistance or of motion. Your cheek is thin, but firm; your eye is haughty and bright; you have the air of one who has lived with men, and struggled, and not been vanquished in the struggle. Suffered! No, man, no—*you* have not suffered."

"My father, it is not in the countenance that Fate graves her records. I have, it is true, contended with my fellows; and if wealth and honour be the premium, not in vain: but I have not contended with Sorrow with a like success; and I stand before you, a being who, if passion be a torment, and the death of the loved a loss, has borne that which the most wretched will not envy."

Again a fearful change came over the face of the recluse —he grasped my arm more vehemently, "You speak my own sorrows—you utter my own curse—I will see you again—you may do my last will better than yon monks. Can I trust you? If you have in truth known misfortune, I will!—I will—yea, even to the outpouring——Merciful, merciful God, what would I say—what would I reveal!"

Suddenly changing his voice, he released me, and said, touching his forehead with a meaning gesture, and a quiet smile, "You say you are my rival in pain? Have you ever known the rage and despair of the heart mount *here?* It is a wonderful thing to be calm as I am now, when that rising makes itself felt in fire and torture!"

"If there be aught, father, which a man who cares not what country he visit, or what deed—so it be not of guilt or shame—he commit, can do towards the quiet of your soul, say it, and I will attempt your will."

"You are kind, my son," said the hermit, resuming his first melancholy and dignified composure of mien and bearing, "and there is something in your voice, which seems to me like a tone that I have heard in youth. Do you live near at hand?"

"In the valley, about four miles hence; I am, like yourself, a fugitive from the world."

"Come to me then to-morrow at eve; yet stay, that is a holy eve, and I must keep it with scourge and prayer. The next at sunset. I shall be collected then, and I would fain know more of you than I do. Bless you, my son—adieu."

"Yet stay, father, may I not conduct you home?"

"No—my limbs are weak, but I trust they can carry me to that home, till I be borne thence to my last. Farewell! the night grows, and man fills even these shades with peril. The eve after next, at sunset, we meet again."

So saying, the hermit waved his hand, and I stood apart, watching his receding figure, until the trees cloaked the last glimpse from my view. I then turned homeward, and reached my cottage in safety, despite the hermit's caution. But I did not retire to rest: a powerful foreboding, rather than suspicion, that in the worn and wasted form which I had beheld, there was identity with one whom I had not met for years, and whom I had believed to be no more, thrillingly possessed me.

"Can—can it be?" thought I. "Can grief have a desolation, or remembrance an agony sufficient to create so awful a change. And of all human beings, for that one to be singled out; that one in whom passion and sin, were, if they existed, nipped in their earliest germ, and seemingly rendered barren of all fruit! If, too, almost against the evidence of sight and sense, an innate feeling has marked in that most altered form the traces of a dread recognition, would not his memory have been yet more vigilant than mine? Am I so changed that he should have looked me in the face so wistfully, and found there nought save the lineaments of a stranger?" And actuated by this thought, I placed the light by the small mirror which graced my chamber. I recalled, as I gazed, my features as they had been in earliest youth. "No," I said, with a sigh, "there is nothing here that he should recognise."

And I said aright: my features, originally small and delicate, had grown enlarged and prominent. The long locks of my youth (for only upon state occasions did my early vanity consent to the fashion of the day) were succeeded by curls, short and crisped; the hues, alternately pale and hectic, that the dreams of romance had once

spread over my cheek, had settled into the unchanging bronze of manhood; the smooth lip, and unshaven chin, were clothed with a thick hair; the once unfurrowed brow was habitually knit in thought; and the ardent, restless expression that boyhood wore, had yielded to the quiet, unmoved countenance of one, in whom long custom has subdued all outward sign of emotion, and many and various events left no prevalent token of the mind, save that of an habitual, but latent resolution. My frame, too, once scarcely less slight than a woman's, was become knit and muscular, and nothing was left by which, in the foreign air, the quiet brow, and the athletic form, my very mother could have recognised the slender figure, and changeful face of the boy she had last beheld. The very sarcasm of the eye was gone: and I had learned the world's easy lesson—to clothe bitterness within in the most rigid vesture of an external composure.

I have noted one thing in others, and it was particularly noticeable in me, viz. that few who mix very largely with men, and with the courtier's or the citizen's design, ever retain the key and tone of their original voice. The voice of a young man is as yet modulated by nature, and expresses the passion of the moment; that of the matured pupil of art expresses rather the customary occupation of his life: whether he aims at persuading, convincing, or commanding others, his voice irrevocably settles into the key he ordinarily employs; and as persuasion is the means men chiefly employ in their commerce with each other, especially in the regions of a court, so a tone of artificial blandness and subdued insinuation, is chiefly that in which the accents of worldly men are clothed; the artificial intonation long continued, grows into nature, and the very pith and basis of the original sound fritter themselves away. The change was great in me, for at that time which I brought in comparison with the present, my age was one in which the voice is yet confused and undecided, struggling between the accent of youth and boyhood; so that even this most powerful and unchanging of all claims upon the memory, was in a great measure absent in me; and nothing but an occasional and rare tone could have produced even that faint and unconscious recognition which the hermit had confessed.

I must be pardoned these egotisms, which the nature of my story renders necessary.

With what eager impatience did I watch the hours to the appointed interview with the hermit languish themselves away. However, before that time arrived, and towards the evening of the next day, I was surprised by the rare honour of a visit from Anselmo himself. He came attended by two of the mendicant friars of his order, and they carried between them a basket of a tolerable size, which, as mine hostess afterward informed me, with many a tear, went back somewhat heavier than it came, from the load of a certain *receptacula*, of that rare wine, which she had had, the evening before, the indiscreet hospitality to produce.

The abbot came to inform me that the hermit had been with him that morning, making many inquiries respecting me. "I told him," said he, "that I was acquainted with your name and birth, but that I was under a solemn promise not to reveal them, without your consent; and I am now here, my son, to learn from you whether that consent may be obtained?"

"Assuredly not, holy father!" said I, hastily; nor was I contented until I had obtained a renewal of his promise to that effect. This seemed to give the abbot some little chagrin: perhaps the hermit had offered a reward for my discovery. However, I knew that Anselmo, though a griping, was a trustworthy man; and I felt safe in his renewed promise. I saw him depart with great satisfaction, and gave myself once more to conjectures respecting the strange recluse.

As, the next evening, I prepared to depart towards the hermitage, I took peculiar pains to give my person a foreign and disguised appearance. A loose dress, of rude and simple material, and a high cap of fur, were pretty successful in accomplishing this purpose. And as I gave the last look at the glass before I left the house, I said, inly, "If there be any truth in my wild and improbable conjecture respecting the identity of the anchorite, I think time and this dress are sufficient wizards to secure me from a chance of discovery. I will keep a guard upon my words and tones, until, if my thought be verified, a moment fit for unmasking myself arrives. But would to God that the thought be groundless! In such circumstances, and after such an absence, to meet *him!* No: and yet—— Well, this meeting will decide."

CHAPTER IV.

The Solution of many Mysteries—a darker View of the Life and Nature of Man.

POWERFUL, though not clearly developed in my own mind, was the motive which made me so strongly desire to preserve the incognito during my interview with the hermit. I have before said, that I could not resist a vague, but intense belief, that he was a person whom I had long believed in the grave; and I had more than once struggled against a dark, but passing suspicion, that that person was in some measure—mediately though not directly—connected with the mysteries of my former life. If both these conjectures were true, I thought it possible that the communication the hermit wished to make me, might be made yet more willingly to me as a stranger, than if he knew who was in reality his confidant. And, at all events, if I could curb the impetuous gushings of my own heart, which yearned for immediate disclosure, I might, by hint and prelude, ascertain the advantages and disadvantages of revealing myself.

I arrived at the well: the hermit was already at the place of rendezvous, seated in the same posture in which I had before seen him, I made my reverence, and accosted him.

"I have not failed you, father."

"That is rarely a true boast with men," said the hermit, smiling mournfully, but without sarcasm; "and were the promise of greater avail, it might not have been so rigidly kept."

"The promise, father, seemed to me of greater weight than you would intimate," answered I.

"How mean you?" said the hermit, hastily.

"Why, that we may perhaps serve each other by our meeting: you, father, may comfort me by your counsels; I you, by my readiness to obey your request."

The hermit looked at me for some moments, and, as well as I could, I turned away my face from his gaze. I might have spared myself the effort. He seemed to recognise nothing familiar in my countenance; perhaps, his mental malady assisted my own alteration.

have inquired respecting you," he said, after a
, "and I hear that you are a learned and wise man,
ıave seen much of the world, and played the part
ıf soldier and of scholar, in its various theatres: is
formation true?"
ot true with respect to the learning, father, but true
egard to the experience. I have been a pilgrim in
countries of Europe."
deed!" said the hermit, eagerly. "Come with me
home, and tell me of the wonders you have seen."
ısisted the hermit to rise, and he walked slowly
ls the cavern, leaning upon my arm. Oh, how that
ouch thrilled through my frame! How I longed
, "Are you not the one whom I have loved, and
ıed, and believed buried in the tomb?" But I
ed myself. We moved on in silence. The her-
ıand was on the door of the cavern, when he said,
ılm tone, but with evident effort, and turning his
om me while he spoke,
ıd did your wanderings ever carry you into the
regions of the north? Did the fame of the great
ver lead you to the city he has founded?"
am right—I am right!" thought I, as I answered.
uth, holy father, I spent not a long time at Peters-
; but I am not a stranger either to its wonders, or
abitants."
ssibly, then, you may have met with the English
ite of the Czar, of whom I hear in my retreat that
ave lately spoken somewhat largely?" The her-
used again. We were now in a long, low passage,
in darkness. I scarcely saw him, yet I heard a
sed movement in his throat, before he uttered the
ıder of the sentence. "He is called the Count
ɔux."
ther," said I, calmly, "I have both seen and known
ın."
ı!" said the hermit, and he leaned for a moment
t the wall; "known him—and—how—how—I
where is he at this present time?"
ıat, father, is a difficult question, respecting one
ıs led so active a life. He was ambassador at the
ɔf ———, just before I left it."
had now passed the passage, and gained a room
rable size; an iron lamp burned within, and afforded
ɔient, but somewhat dim light. The hermit, as I

concluded my reply, sunk down on a long stone bench, beside a table of the same substance, and leaning his face on his hand, so that the long, large sleeve he wore, perfectly concealed his features, said, "Pardon me, my breath is short, and my frame weak—I am quite exhausted—but will speak to you more anon."

I uttered a short answer, and drew a small wooden stool within a few feet of the hermit's seat. After a brief silence he rose, placed wine, bread, and preserved fruits before me, and bade me eat. I seemed to comply with his request, and the apparent diversion of my attention from himself somewhat relieved the embarrassment under which he evidently laboured.

"Think you," he said, "that were my commission to this—to the Count Devereux—you would execute it faithfully and with speed? Yet stay—you have a high mien, as of one above fortune, but your garb is rude and poor: and if aught of gold could compensate your trouble, the hermit has other treasuries beside this cell."

"I will do your bidding, father, without robbing the poor. You wish then that I should seek Morton Devereux—you wish that I should summon him hither—you wish to see and to confer with him!"

"God of mercy forbid!" cried the hermit, and with such vehemence that I was startled from the design of revealing myself, which I was on the point of executing. "I would rather that these walls would crush me into dust, or that this solid stone would crumble beneath my feet—ay, even into a bottomless pit, than meet the glance of Morton Devereux."

"Is it even so?" said I, stooping over the wine cup; "ye have been foes then, I suspect.—Well, it matters not—tell me your errand, and it shall be done."

"Done!" cried the hermit, and a new, and certainly a most natural suspicion darted within him,—"done! and —fool that I am!—who, or what are you, that I should believe you take so keen an interest in the wishes of a man utterly unknown to you? I tell you that my wish is, that you should cross seas and traverse lands until you find the man I have named to you. Will a stranger do this, and without hire?—no—no—I was a fool, and will trust the monks, and give gold, and then my errand will be sped."

"Father, or rather, brother," said I, with a slow and firm voice, "for you are of mine own age, and you have

the passion and the infirmity which make brethren of all mankind, I am one to whom all places are alike: it matters not whether I visit a northern or a southern clime—I have wealth, which is sufficient to smooth toil—I have leisure, which makes occupation an enjoyment. More than this, I am one, who in my gayest and wildest moments have ever loved mankind, and would have renounced at any time mine own pleasure for the advantage of another. But at this time, above all others, I am most disposed to forget myself, and there is a passion in your words which leads me to hope that it may be a great benefit which I can confer upon you."

"You speak well," said the hermit, musingly, "and I may trust you; I will consider yet a little longer, and to-morrow at this hour, you shall have my final answer. If you execute the charge I intrust to you, may the blessing of a dying and most wretched man, cleave to you for ever!—But, hush—the clock strikes—it is my hour of prayer."

And pointing to a huge black clock that hung opposite the door, and indicated the hour of nine, the hermit fell on his knees, and clasping his hands tightly, bent his face over them in the attitude of humiliation and devotion. I followed his example. After a few minutes he rose—"Once in every three hours," said he, with a ghastly expression, "for the last twelve years have I bowed my soul in anguish before God, and risen to feel that it was in vain—I am cursed without and within!"

"My father, my father, is this your faith in the mercies of the Redeemer who died for Man?"

"Talk not to me of faith!" cried the hermit, wildly. "Ye laymen and worldlings know nothing of its mysteries, and its powers. But begone! the dread hour is upon me, when my tongue is loosed, and my brain darkened, and I know not my words, and shudder at my own thoughts. Begone! no human being shall witness those moments—they are only for God and my own soul."

So saying, this unhappy and strange being seized me by the arm and dragged me towards the passage we had entered. I was in doubt whether to yield to, or to contend with, him; but there was a glare in his eye, and a flush upon his brow, which, while it betrayed the dreadful disease of his mind, made me fear that resistance to his wishes might operate dangerously upon a frame so feeble and reduced. I therefore mechanically obeyed him. He

opened again the entrance to his rugged home, and the moonlight streamed wanly over his dark robes and spectral figure.

"Go," said he, more mildly than before—"go, and forgive the vehemence of one, whose mind and heart are alike broken within him. Go, but return to-morrow at sunset. Your air disposes me to trust you."

So saying, he closed the door upon me, and I stood without the cavern alone.

But did I return home? Did I hasten to press my couch in sleep, and sweet forgetfulness, while he was in that gloomy sepulture of the living, a prey to anguish, and torn by the fangs of madness and a fierce disease? No—on the damp grass, beneath the silent skies, I passed a night, which I ween well, could scarcely have been less wretched than his own. My conjecture was now, and in full, confirmed. Heavens! how I loved that man—how, from my youngest years, had my soul's fondest affections interlaced themselves with him!—with what anguish I had wept his imagined death! and now to know that he lay within those walls, smitten from brain to heart, with so fearful and mysterious a curse—to know, too, that he dreaded the sight of me—of me who would have laid down my life for his!—the grave which I imagined his home, had been a mercy to a doom like this!

"He fears," I murmured, and I wept as I said it, "to look on one who would watch over, and sooth, and bear with him, with more than a woman's love. By what awful fate has this calamity fallen on one so holy and so pure? or by what pre-ordered destiny did I come to these solitudes, to find at the same time a new charm for the earth, and a spell to change it again into a desert and a place of wo?"

All night I kept vigil by the cave, and listened if I could catch moan or sound; but every thing was silent: the thick walls of the rock kept even the voice of despair from my ear. The day dawned, and I retired among the trees, lest he might come out unawares and see me. At sunrise I saw him appear for a few moments, and again retire, and I then hastened home, exhausted and wearied by the internal conflicts of the night, to gather coolness and composure for the ensuing interview, which I contemplated at once with eagerness and dread.

At the appointed hour, I repaired to the cavern: the

door was partially closed; I opened it after hearing no answer to my knock, and walked gently along the passage; but I heard shrieks, and groans, and wild laughter, as I neared the rude chamber. I paused for a moment, and then in terror and dismay entered the apartment. It was empty, but I saw near the clock a small door; from within which the sounds that alarmed me proceeded. I had no scruple in opening it, and found myself in the hermit's sleeping chamber; a small dark room, where, upon a straw pallet, lay the wretched occupant in a state of frantic delirium. I stood mute and horror-struck, while his exclamations of frenzy burst upon my ear.

"There—there!" he cried, "I have struck thee to the heart, and now I will kneel, and kiss those white lips, and bathe my hands in that blood. Ha!—do I hate thee? —hate—ay—hate, abhor, detest. Have you the beads there?—let me tell them. Yes, I will go to the confessional—confess? No, no—all the priests in the world could not lift up a soul so heavy with guilt. Help—help —help! I am falling—falling—there is the pit, and the fire, and the devils! Do you hear them laugh?—I can laugh too!—ha—ha—ha! Hush, I have written it all out, in a fair hand—he shall read it—and then, O God! what curses he will heap upon my head! Blessed St. Francis, hear me! Lazarus, Lazarus, speak for me!"

Thus did the hermit rave, while my flesh crept to hear him. I stood by his bedside, and called on him, but he neither heard nor saw me. Upon the ground, by the bed's-head, as if it had dropped from under the pillow, was a packet sealed and directed to myself: I knew the hand-writing at a glance, even though the letters were blotted and irregular, and possibly traced in the first moment that his present curse fell upon the writer. I placed the packet in my bosom: the hermit saw not the motion, he lay back on the bed, seemingly in utter exhaustion. I turned away, and hastened to the monastery for assistance. As I hurried through the passage, the hermit's shrieks again broke upon me, with a fiercer vehemence than before. I flew from them, as if they were sounds from the abyss of Hades. I flew till, breathless, and half-senseless myself, I fell down exhausted by the gate of the monastery.

The two most skilled in physic of the brethren were immediately summoned, and they lost not a moment in

accompanying me to the cavern. All that evening, until midnight, the frenzy of the maniac seemed rather to increase than abate. But at that hour, exactly, indeed, as the clock struck twelve, he fell all at once into a deep sleep.

Then for the first time, but not till the wearied brethren had, at this favourable symptom, permitted themselves to return for a brief interval to the monastery, to seek refreshment for themselves, and to bring down new medicines for the patient—then, for the first time, I rose from the hermit's couch by which I had hitherto kept watch, and repairing to the outer chamber, took forth the packet superscribed with my name. There alone in that gray vault, and by the sepulchral light of the single lamp, I read what follows.

THE HERMIT'S MANUSCRIPT.

"Morton Devereux, if ever this reach you, read it, shudder, and, whatever your afflictions, bless God that you are not as I am. Do you remember my prevailing characteristic as a boy? No, you do not. You will say, 'devotion!' It was not! 'Gentleness.' It was not—it was JEALOUSY! Now does the truth flash on you? Yes, that was the disease that was in my blood, and in my heart, and through whose ghastly medium every living object was beheld. Did I love you? Yes, I loved you—ay, almost with a love equal to your own. I loved my mother—I loved Gerald—I loved Montreuil. It was a part of my nature to love, and I did not resist the impulse. You I loved better than all; but I was jealous of each. If my mother caressed you or Gerald—if *you* opened your heart to either, it stung me to the quick. I it was who said to my mother, 'Caress him not, or I shall think you love him better than me.' I it was who widened, from my veriest childhood, the breach between Gerald and yourself. I it was who gave to the childish reproach a venom, and to the childish quarrel a barb. Was this love? Yes, it *was* love; but I could not endure that ye should love one another as ye loved me. It delighted me when one confided to my ear a complaint against the other, and said, 'Aubrey, this blow could not have come from thee!'

"Montreuil early perceived my bias of temper: he might have corrected it, and with ease. I was not evil in-

disposition; I was insensible of my own vice. Had its malignity been revealed to me, I should have recoiled in horror. Montreuil had a vast power over me; he could mould me at his will. Montreuil, I repeat, might have saved me, and thyself, and a third being, better and purer than either of us was, even in his cradle. Montreuil did not: he had an object to serve, and he sacrificed our whole house to it. He found me one day weeping over a dog which I had killed. 'Why did you destroy it?' he said; and I answered, 'Because it loved Morton better than me!' And the priest said, 'Thou didst right, Aubrey!' Yes, from that time he took advantage of my infirmity, and could rouse or calm all my passions in proportion as he irritated or soothed it.

"You know this man's object during the latter period of his residence with us: it was the restoration of the House of Stuart. He was alternately the spy and the agitator in that cause. Among more comprehensive plans for effecting this object, was that of securing the heirs to the great wealth and popular name of Sir William Devereux. This was only a minor mesh in the intricate web of his schemes; but it is the character of the man to take exactly the same pains, and pursue the same laborious intrigues, for a small object as for a great one. His first impression, on entering our house, was in favour of Gerald; and I believe he really likes him to this day better than either of us. Partly your sarcasms, partly Gerald's disputes with you, partly my representations—for I was jealous even of the love of Montreuil—prepossessed him against you. He thought, too, that Gerald had more talent to serve his purposes than yourself, and more facility in being moulded to them; and he believed our uncle's partiality to you far from being unalienable. I have said, that at the latter period of his residence with us he was an agent of the exiled cause. At the time I *now* speak of, he had not entered into the great political scheme which engrossed him afterward. He was merely a restless and aspiring priest, whose whole hope, object, ambition, was the advancement of his order. He knew that whoever inherited, or whoever shared my uncle's wealth, could, under legitimate regulation, promote *any* end which the heads of that order might select; and he wished therefore to gain the mastery over us all. Intrigue was essentially woven with his genius, and by intrigue only did he ever seek to arrive at any end he had

in view.* He soon obtained a mysterious and pervading power over Gerald and myself. Your temper at once irritated him, and made him despair of obtaining an ascendant over one who, though he testified in childhood none of the talents for which he has since been noted, testified, nevertheless, a shrewd, penetrating, and sarcastic power of observation and detection. You, therefore, he resolved to leave to the irregularities of your own nature, confident that they would yield him the opportunity of detaching your uncle from you, and ultimately securing to Gerald his estates.

"The trial at school first altered his intentions. He imagined that he then saw in you powers which might be rendered availing to him: he conquered his pride—a great feature in his character—and he resolved to seek your affection. Your subsequent regularity of habits, and success in study, confirmed him in his resolution; and when he learned from my uncle's own lips that the Devereux estates would devolve on you, he thought that it would be easier to secure your affection to him than to divert that affection which my uncle had conceived for you. At this time, I repeat, he had no particular object in view; none, at least, beyond that of obtaining, for the interest of his order, the direction of great wealth and some political influence. Some time after—I know not exactly when, but before we returned to take our permanent abode at Devereux Court—a share in the grand political intrigue which was then in so many branches carried on throughout England, and even Europe, was confided to Montreuil.

"In this, I believe he was the servant of his order, rather than immediately of the exiled house; and I have since heard that even at that day he had acquired a great reputation among the professors of the former. You, Morton, he decoyed not into this scheme before he left England: he had not acquired a sufficient influence over you to trust you with the disclosure. To Gerald and myself he was more confidential. Gerald eagerly embraced his projects through a spirit of enterprise—I through a spirit of awe and of religion. RELIGION! Yes,—then, —long after,—now,—when my heart was and is the home of all withering and evil passions, religion reigned,—

* It will be observed, that Aubrey frequently repeats former assertions; this is one of the most customary traits of insanity.—Ed.

reigns, over me a despot and a tyrant. Its terrors haunt me at this hour—they people the earth and the air with shapes of ghastly menace! They—Heaven pardon me! what would my madness utter? Madness?—madness? Ay, *that* is the real scourge, the real fire, the real torture, the real hell of this fair earth!

"Montreuil, then, by different pleas, won over Gerald and myself. He left us, but engaged us in constant correspondence. 'Aubrey,' he said, before he departed, and when he saw that I was wounded by his apparent cordiality towards you and Gerald—'Aubrey,' he said, soothing me on this point, 'think not that I trust Gerald or the arrogant Morton as I trust you. *You* have my real heart and my real trust. It is necessary to the execution of this project, so important to the interests of religion, and so agreeable to the will of Heaven, that we should secure all co-operators; but they, your brothers, Aubrey, are the tools of that mighty design—you are its friend.' Thus it was that, at all times when he irritated too sorely the vice of my nature, he flattered it into seconding his views; and thus, instead of conquering my evil passions, he conquered by them. Curses——No, no, no!—I *will* be calm.

"We returned to Devereux Court, and we grew from boyhood into youth. I loved you then, Morton. Ah! what would I not give now for one pure feeling, such as I felt in your love? Do you remember the day on which you had extorted from my uncle his consent to your leaving us for the pleasures and pomps of London? Do you remember the evening of that day, when I came to seek you, and we sat down on a little mound, and talked over your projects, and you spoke then to me of my devotion, and my purer and colder feelings? Morton, at that very moment my veins burned with passion!—at that very moment my heart was feeding the vulture fated to live and prey within it for ever! Thrice did I resolve to confide in you, as we then sat together, and thrice did my evil genius forbid it. You seemed, even in your affection to me, so wholly engrossed with your own hopes—you seemed so little to regret leaving me—you stung, so often and so deeply, in that short conference, that feeling which made me desire to monopolize all things in those I loved, that I said inly—'Why should I bare my heart to one who can so little understand it?' And so we turned home, and you dreamed not of that

which was then within me, and which was destined to be your curse and mine.

"Not many weeks previous to that night, I had seen one whom to see was to love! Love! I tell you, Morton, *that* word is expressive of soft and fond emotions, and there should be another expressive of all that is fierce, and dark, and unrelenting in the human heart!—all that seems most like the deadliest and the blackest hate, and yet is not hate! I saw this being, and from that moment my real nature, which had slept hitherto, awoke! I remember well, it was one evening in the beginning of summer that I first saw her. She sat alone in the little garden beside the cottage door, and I paused, and, unseen, looked over the slight fence that separated us, and fed my eyes with a loveliness that I thought, till then, only twilight or the stars could wear! From that evening I came, night after night, to watch her from the same spot; and every time I beheld her, the poison entered deeper and deeper into my system. At length I had an opportunity of being known to her—of speaking to her—of hearing her speak—of touching the ground she had hallowed—of entering the home where she dwelt!

"I must explain; I said that both Gerald and myself corresponded privately with Montreuil—we were both bound over to secrecy with regard to you—and this, my temper, and Gerald's coolness with you, rendered an easy obligation to both;—I say my temper—for I loved to think I had a secret not known to another; and I carried this reserve even to the degree of concealing from Gerald himself the greater part of the correspondence between me and the *Abbé*. In his correspondence with each of us, Montreuil acted with his usual skill; to Gerald, as the elder in years, the proner to enterprise, and the manlier in aspect and in character, was allotted whatever object was of real trust or importance. Gerald it was, who, under pretence of pursuing his accustommed sports, conferred with the various agents of intrigue who from time to time visited our coast; and to me the *Abbé* gave words of endearment, and affected the language of more entire trust. 'Whatever,' he would say, 'in our present half mellowed projects, is exposed to danger, but promises not reward, I intrust to Gerald; hereafter, far higher employment, under far safer and surer auspices, will be yours. We are the heads—be ours the nobler occupation to plan—and let us leave to inferior natures, the vain, and perilous triumph to execute what we design.'

"All this I readily assented to; for, despite my acquiescence in Montreuil's wishes, I loved not enterprise, or rather I hated whatever roused me from the dreamy and abstracted indolence which was most dear to my temperament. Sometimes, however, with a great show of confidence, Montreuil would request me to execute some quiet and unimportant commission; and of this nature was one which I received while I was thus, unknown even to the object, steeping my soul in the first intoxication of love. The plots then carried on by certain ecclesiastics, I need not say extended, in one linked chain, over the greater part of the continent. Spain, in especial, was the theatre of these intrigues; and among the tools employed in executing them were some, who, though banished from that country, still, by the rank they had held in it, carried a certain importance in their very names. Foremost of these was the father of the woman I loved—and foremost, in whatever promised occupation to a restless mind, he was always certain to be.

"Montreuil now commissioned me to seek out a certain Barnard (an underling in those secret practices or services, for which he afterward suffered, and who was then in that part of the country), and to communicate to him some messages, of which he was to be the bearer to this Spaniard. A thought flashed upon me—Montreuil's letter mentioned, accidentally, that the Spaniard had never hitherto seen Barnard:—could I not personate the latter—deliver the messages myself, and thus win that introduction to the daughter which I so burningly desired, and which, from the great and close reserve of the father's habits, I might not otherwise effect? The plan was open to two objections: one, that I was known personally in the town, in the environs of which the Spaniard lived, and he might therefore very soon discover who I really was; the other, that I was not in possession of all the information which Barnard might possess, and which the Spaniard might wish to learn; but these objections had not much weight with me. To the first, I said inly, 'I will oppose the most constant caution; I will go always on foot, and alone—I will never be seen at the town itself—and even should the Spaniard, who seems rarely to stir abroad, and who, possibly, does not speak our language—even should he learn, by accident, that Barnard is only another name for Aubrey Devereux, it will not be before I have gained my object; nor, perhaps, before the time when I myself may wish to

acknowledge my identity.' To the second objection I saw a yet more ready answer. 'I will acquaint Montreuil at once, I said, 'with my intention; I will claim his connivance as a proof of his confidence, and as an essay of my own genius of intrigue.' I did so; the priest, perhaps delighted to involve me so deeply, and to find me so ardent, in his project, consented. Fortunately, as I before said, Barnard was an underling—young—unknown—and obscure. My youth, therefore, was not so great a foe to my assumed disguise as it might otherwise have been. Montreuil supplied all requisite information. I tried (for the first time, with a beating heart and a tremulous voice,) the imposition; it succeeded—I continued it. Yes, Morton, yes!—pour forth upon me your bitterest execration—in me—in your brother—in the brother so dear to you—in the brother whom you imagined so passionless—so pure—so sinless—behold that Barnard—the lover—the idolatrous lover—the foe—the deadly foe—of Isora d'Alvarez!"

Here the manuscript was defaced for some pages, by incoherent and meaningless ravings. It seemed as if one of his dark fits of frenzy had at that time come over the writer. At length, in a more firm and clear character than that immediately preceding it, the manuscript continued as follows:

"I loved her, but even then it was with a fierce and ominous love—(ominous of what it became). Often in the still evenings, when we stood together watching the sun set—when my tongue trembled but did not dare to speak—when all soft and sweet thoughts filled the heart and glistened in the eye of that most sensitive and fairy being—when my own brow, perhaps, seemed to reflect the same emotions—feelings, which I even shuddered to conceive, raged within me. Had we stood together, in those moments, upon the brink of a precipice, I could have wound my arms around her, and leaped with her into the abyss. Every thing but one nursed my passion—nature—solitude—early dreams—all kindled and fed that fire: religion only combated it; I knew it was a crime to love any of earth's creatures as I loved. I used the scourge and the fast—I wept hot—burning tears—I prayed, and the intensity of my prayer appalled even myself, as it rose from my maddened heart, in the depth and stillness of the lone night; but the flame burned higher and more scorchingly from the opposition; nay, it was the very know-

ledge that my love was criminal, that made it assume so fearful and dark a shape. 'Thou art the cause of my downfall from heaven!' I muttered, when I looked upon Isora's calm face—'thou feelest it not, and I could destroy thee and myself—myself the criminal—thee the cause of the crime!'

"It must have been that my eyes betrayed my feelings, that Isora loved me not—that she shrunk from me even at the first—why else should I not have called forth the same sentiments which she gave to you? Was not my form cast in a mould as fair as yours?—did not my voice whisper in as sweet a tone?—did I not love her with as wild a love? Why should she not have loved me? I was the first whom she beheld—she would—ay, perhaps she *would* have loved me, if you had not come and marred all. Curse yourself, then, that you were my rival!—curse yourself that you made my heart as a furnace, and smit my brain with frenzy—curse—O, sweet virgin, forgive me!—I know not—I know not what my tongue utters or my hand traces!

"You came, then, Morton, you came—you knew her—you loved her—she loved you. I learned that you had gained admittance to the cottage, and the moment I learned it, I looked on Isora, and felt my fate, as by intuition: I saw at once that she was prepared to love you—I saw the very moment when that love kindled from conception into form—I saw—and at that moment my eyes reeled and my ears rung as with the sound of a rushing sea, and I thought I felt a chord snap within my brain, which has never been united again.

"Once only, after your introduction to the cottage, did I think of confiding to you my love and rivalship; that was after one night when we met by the castle cave, and when your kindness touched and softened me, despite of myself. The day after that night I sought you, with the intention of communicating to you all; and while I was yet struggling with my embarrassment, and the suffocating tide of my emotions, you premeditated me, by giving me *your* confidence. Engrossed with your own feelings, you were not observant of mine; and as you dwelt and dilated upon your love for Isora, all emotions, save those of agony and of fury, vanished from my breast. I did not answer you then at any length, for I was too agitated to trust to prolix speech; but by the next day I had recovered myself, and I resolved, as far as I was able, to play the hypocrite.

'He cannot love her as I do!' I said; 'perhaps I may, without disclosure of my rivalship, and without sin in the attempt, detach him from her by reason.' Fraught with this idea, I collected myself—sought you—remonstrated with you—represented the worldly folly of your love, and uttered all that prudence preaches—in vain, when it preaches against passion.

"Let me be brief. I saw that I made no impression on you—I stifled my wrath—I continued to visit and watch Isora. I timed my opportunities well—my constant knowledge of your motions allowed me to do that; besides, I represented to the Spaniard the necessity, through political motives, of concealing myself from you; hence, we never encountered each other. One evening, Alvarez had gone out to meet one of his countrymen and confederates. I found Isora alone, in the most sequestered part of the garden,—I found her alone; and her loveliness, and her exceeding gentleness of manner, melted me. For the first time audibly, my heart spoke out, and I told her of my idolatry. Idolatry!—ay, that is the only word, since it signifies both worship and guilt. She heard me timidly, gently, coldly. She spoke—and I found confirmed, from her own lips, what my reason had before told me—that there was no hope for me. The iron that entered, also roused, my heart. 'Enough!' I cried fiercely, 'you love this Morton Devereux, and for him I am scorned.' Isora blushed and trembled, and all my senses fled from me. I scarcely know in what words my rage and my despair clothed themselves; but I know that I divulged myself to her—I know that I told her I was the brother—the rival—the enemy of the man she loved,—I know that I uttered the fiercest and the wildest menaces and execrations—I know that my vehemence so overpowered and terrified her, that her mind was scarcely less clouded—less lost, rather, than my own. At that moment, your horse's hoofs were heard; Isora's eye brightened, and her mien grew firm. 'He comes,' she said, 'and he will protect me!'—'Hark!' I said, sinking my voice, and, as my drawn sword flashed in one hand, the other grasped her arm with a savage force—'hark, woman!' I said—and an oath of the blackest fury accompanied my threats—'swear that you will never divulge to Morton Devereux, who is his real rival—that you will never declare to him, nor to any one else, that Barnard and Aubrey Devereux are the same—swear this, or *I* swear (and I repeated, with a solemn

vehemence, that dread oath), that I will stay here—that I will confront my rival—that, the moment he beholds me, I will plunge this sword in his bosom—and that, before I perish myself, I will hasten to the town, and will utter there a secret which will send your father to the gallows—now, your choice?'

"Morton, you have often praised, my uncle has often jested at, the womanish softness of my face. There have been moments when I have seen that face in the glass, and known it not, but started in wild affright, and fancied that I beheld a demon; perhaps in that moment this change was over it. Slowly Isora gazed upon me—slowly blanched into the hues of death grew her cheek and lip—slowly that lip uttered the oath I enjoined. I released my gripe, and she fell to the earth, sudden and stunned as if struck by lightning. I stayed not to look on what I had done—I heard your step advance—I fled by a path that led from the garden to the beach—and I reached my home without retaining a single recollection of the space I had traversed to attain it.

"Despite of the night I passed—a night which I will leave you to imagine—I rose the next morning with a burning interest to learn from you what had passed after my flight, and with a power, peculiar to the stormiest passions, of an outward composure while I listened to the recital. I saw that I was safe, and I heard with a joy so rapturous, that I question whether even Isora's assent to *my* love would have given me an equal transport, that she had rejected you. I uttered some advice to you commonplace enough—it displeased you, and we separated.

"That evening, to my surprise, I was privately visited by Montreuil. He had some designs in hand, which brought him from France into the neighbourhood, but which made him desirous of concealment. He soon drew from me my secret; it is marvellous, indeed, what power he had of penetrating, ruling, moulding my feelings and my thoughts. He wished, at that time, a communication to be made, and a letter to be given, to Alvarez. I could not execute this commission personally, for you had informed me of your intention of watching if you could not discover or meet with Barnard, and I knew you were absent from home on that very purpose. Nor was Montreuil himself desirous of incurring the risk of being seen by you—you over whom, sooner or later, he then trusted to obtain a power equal to that which he held over your brothers

Gerald then was chosen to execute the commission. He did so—he met Alvarez for the first and the only time on the beach, by the town of ———. You saw him, and imagined you beheld the real Barnard.

"But I anticipate—for you did not inform me of that occurrence, nor the inference you drew from it, till afterward. You returned, however, after witnessing that meeting, and for two days your passions (passions which, intense and fierce as mine, show that under similar circumstances, you might have been equally guilty) terminated in fever. You were confined to your bed for three or four days; meanwhile I took advantage of the event. Montreuil suggested a plan which I readily embraced. I sought the Spaniard, and told him in confidence that you were a suitor—but a suitor upon the most dishonourable terms—to his daughter. I told him, moreover, that you meant, in order to deprive Isora of protection, and abate any obstacles resulting from her pride, to betray Alvarez, whose schemes you had detected, to the government. I told him that his best and most prudent, nay, his only chance of safety for Isora and himself, was to leave his present home, and take refuge in the vast mazes of the metropolis. I told him not to betray to you his knowledge of your criminal intentions, lest it might needlessly exasperate you. I furnished him wherewithal to repay you the sum which you had lent him, and by which you had commenced his acquaintance; and I dictated to him the very terms of the note in which the sum was to be enclosed. After this I felt happy. You were separated from Isora—she might forget you—you might forget her. I was possessed of the secret of her father's present retreat—I might seek it at my pleasure, and ultimately—so hope whispered—prosper in my love.

"Some time afterward you mentioned your suspicions of Gerald; I did not corroborate, but I did not seek to destroy them. 'They already hate each other,' I said: 'can the hate be greater? meanwhile, let it divert suspicion from me!' Gerald knew of the agency of the real Barnard, though he did not know that I had assumed the name of that person. When you taxed him with his knowledge of the man, he was naturally confused. You interpreted that confusion into the fact of being your rival, while in truth it arose from his belief that you had possessed yourself of his political schemes. Montreuil, who had lurked chiefly in the islet opposite 'the Castle Cave,' had returned to France on the same day that Alvarez re-

paired to London. Previous to this, we had held some conferences together upon my love. At first he had opposed and reasoned with it; but, startled and astonished by the intensity with which it possessed me, he gave way to my vehemence at last. I have said that I had adopted his advice in one instance. The fact of having received his advice—the advice of one so pious—so free from human passion—so devoted to one object, which appeared to him, the cause of Religion—advice, too, in a love so fiery and overwhelming;—that fact made me think myself less criminal than I had done before. He advised me yet further. 'Do not seek Isora,' he said, 'till some time has elapsed—till her newborn love for your brother has died away—till the impression of fear you have caused in her is somewhat effaced—till time and absence too, have done their work in the mind of Morton, and you will no longer have for your rival, not only a brother, but a man of a fierce, resolute, and unrelenting temper.'

"I yielded to this advice—partly because it promised so fair; partly because I was not systematically vicious, and I wished, if possible, to do away with our rivalship; and principally because I knew, in the meanwhile, that if I was deprived of her presence, so also were you; and jealousy with me was a far more intolerable and engrossing passion, than the very love from which it sprung. So time passed on—you affected to have conquered your attachment; you affected to take pleasure in levity, and the idlest pursuits of worldly men. I saw deeper into your heart. For the moment I entertained the passion of love in my own breast, my eyes became gifted with a second vision to penetrate the most mysterious and hoarded secrets in the love of others.

"Two circumstances of importance happened before you left Devereux Court for London; the one was the introduction to your service of Jean Desmarais, the second was your breach with Montreuil. I speak now of the first. A very early friend did the priest possess, born in the same village as himself, and in the same rank of life; he had received a good education, and possessed natural genius. At a time when, from some fraud in a situation of trust which he had held in a French nobleman's family, he was in destitute and desperate circumstances, it occurred to Montreuil to provide for him by placing him in our family. Some accidental and frivolous remark of yours, which I had repeated in my correspondence with Mon-

treuil, as illustrative of your manner, and your affected pursuits at that time, presented an opportunity to a plan before conceived. Desmarais came to England in a smuggler's vessel, presented himself to you as a servant, and was accepted. In this plan Montreuil had two views—first, that of securing Desmarais a place in England, tolerably profitable to himself, and convenient for any plot or scheme which Montreuil might require of him in this country; secondly, that of setting a perpetual and most adroit spy upon all your motions.

"As to the second occurrence to which I have referred, viz. your breach with Montreuil——"

Here Aubrey, with the same terrible distinctness which had characterized his previous details, and which shed a double horror over the contrast of the darker and more frantic passages in the manuscript, related what the reader will remember Oswald had narrated before, respecting the letter he had brought from Madame de Balzac. It seems that Montreuil's abrupt appearance in the hall had been caused by Desmarais, who had recognised Oswald, on his dismounting at the gate, and had previously known that he was in the employment of the Jansenistical *intriguante*, Madame de Balzac.

Aubrey proceeded then to say that Montreuil, invested with far more direct authority and power than he had been hitherto, in the projects of that wise order whose doctrines he had so darkly perverted, repaired to London; and that soon after my departure for the same place, Gerald and Aubrey left Devereux Court in company with each other; but Gerald, whom very trifling things diverted from any project, however important, returned to Devereux Court, to accomplish the prosecution of some rustic *amour*, without even reaching London. Aubrey, on the contrary, had proceeded to the metropolis, sought the suburb in which Alvarez lived, procured, in order to avoid any probable chance of meeting me, a lodging in the same obscure quarter, and had renewed his suit to Isora. The reader is already in possession of the ill success which attended it. Aubrey had at last confessed his real name to the father. The Spaniard was dazzled by the prospect of so honourable an alliance for his daughter. From both came Isora's persecution, but in both was it resisted. But this has been before said;* and passing over passages in the manu-

* See Volume I. page 140

script, of the most stormy incoherence and the most gloomy passion, I come to what follows:—

"I learned then from Desmarais, that you had taken away her and the dying father; that you had placed them in a safe and honourable home. That man, so implicitly the creature of Montreuil, or rather of his own interest, with which Montreuil was identified, was easily induced to betray you also to me—me, whom he imagined, moreover, utterly the tool of the priest, and of whose torturing interest, in this peculiar disclosure, he was not at that time aware. I visited Isora in her new abode, and again and again she trembled beneath my rage. Then, for the second time, I attempted force. Ha! ha! Morton! I think I see you now!—I think I hear your muttered curse! Curse on! When you read this, I shall be beyond your vengeance—beyond human power. And yet I think if I were mere clay—if I were the mere senseless heap of ashes that the grave covers—if I were not the thing that must live for ever and for ever, far away in unimagined worlds, where nought that has earth's life can come—I should tremble beneath the sod as your foot pressed, and your execration rung over it. A second time I attempted force—a second time I was repulsed by the same means—by a woman's hand and a woman's dagger. But I knew that I had one hold over Isora, from which, while she loved you, I could never be driven: I knew that by threatening your *life*, I could command her will, and terrify her into compliance with my own. I made her reiterate her vow of concealment: and I discovered, by some words dropping from her fear, that she believed you already suspected me, and had been withheld, by her entreaties, from seeking me out. I questioned her more, and soon perceived that it was (as indeed I before knew) Gerald whom you suspected, not me; but I did not tell this to Isora. I suffered her to cherish a mistake profitable to my disguise; but I saw at once that it might betray me, if you ever met and conferred at length with Gerald upon this point; and I exacted from Isora a pledge, that she would effectually and for ever bind you not to breathe a single suspicion to him. When I had left the room, I returned once more to warn her against uniting herself with you. Wretch, selfish, accursed wretch that you were, why did you suffer her to transgress that warning?

"I fled from the house, as a fiend flies from a being whom he has possessed. I returned at night to look up at

the window, and linger by the door, and keep watch beside the home which held Isora. Such, in her former abode, had been my nightly wont. I had no evil thought or foul intent in this customary vigil—no, not one! Strangely enough, with the tempestuous and overwhelming emotions which constituted the greater part of my love, was mingled,—though subdued and latent—a stream of the softest, yea, I might add, almost of the holiest tenderness. Often after one of those outpourings of rage, and menace, and despair, I would fly to some quiet spot, and weep, till all the hardness of my heart was wept away. And often in those nightly vigils I would pause by the door and murmur, 'This shelter, denied not to the beggar and the beggar's child, this would you deny to me, if you could dream that I was so near you. And yet, had you loved me, instead of lavishing upon me all your hatred and your contempt—had you loved me, I would have served and worshipped you as man knows not worship or service. You shudder at my vehemence now—I could not then have breathed a whisper to wound you. You tremble now at the fierceness of my breast—you would then rather have marvelled at its softness.'

"I was already at my old watch when you encountered me—you addressed me, I answered not—you approached me, and I fled. Fled—there—there was the shame, and the sting, and the goad of my sentiments towards you. I am not naturally afraid of danger, though my nerves are sometimes weak, and have sometimes shrunk from it. I have known something of peril in late years, when my frame has been bowed and broken—perils by storms at sea, and the knives of robbers upon land—and I have looked upon it with a quiet eye. But you, Morton Devereux, you I always feared. I had seen from my childhood others whose nature was far stronger than mine, yield and recoil at yours—I had seen the giant and bold strength of Gerald quail before your bent brow—I had seen even the hardy pride of Montreuil baffled by your curled lip, and the stern sarcasm of your glance—I had seen you, too, in your wild moments of ungoverned rage—and I knew that if earth held one whose passions were fiercer than my own, it was you. But your passions were sustained even in their fiercest excess—your passions were the mere weapons of your mind—my passions were the torturers and the tyrants of mine. Your passions seconded your will—mine blinded and overwhelmed it. From my infancy,

even while I loved you most, you awed me; and years, in deepening the impression had made it indelible. I could not confront the thought of your knowing all, and of meeting you after that knowledge. And this fear, while it unnerved me at some moments, at others only maddened my ferocity the more by the stings of shame and self-contempt.

"I fled from you—you pursued—you gained upon me—you remember now how I was preserved. I dashed through the inebriated revellers who obstructed your path, and I gained my own lodging, which was close at hand; for the same day on which I learned Isora's change of residence I changed my own, in order to be near it. Did I feel joy for my escape? No—I could have gnawed the very flesh from my bones in the agony of my shame. 'I could brave,' I said, 'I could threat—I could offer violence to the woman who rejected me, and yet I could not face the rival for whom I am scorned!' At that moment a resolution flashed across my mind, exactly as if a train of living fire had been driven before it. Morton, I resolved to murder you, and in that very hour! A pistol lay on my my table—I took it, concealed it about my person, and repaired to the shelter of a large portico, beside which I knew that you must pass to your own home in the same street. Scarcely three minutes had elapsed between the reaching my house, and the leaving it on this errand. I knew, for I had heard swords clash, that you would be detained some time in the street by the rioters—I thought it probable also that you might still continue the search for me; and I knew even that had you hastened at once to your home, you could scarcely have reached it before I reached my shelter. I hurried on—I arrived at the spot—I screened myself and awaited your coming. You came, borne in the arms of two men—others followed in the rear—I saw your face destitute of the hue and aspect of life, and your clothes streaming with blood. I was horror-stricken. I joined the crowd—I learned that you had been stabbed, and it was feared mortally.

"I did not return home—no, I went into the fields, and lay out all night, and lifted up my heart to God, and wept aloud, and peace fell upon me—at least what was peace, compared to the tempestuous darkness which had before reigned in my breast. The sight of you, bleeding and insensible—you, against whom I had harboured a fratricide's purpose—had stricken as it were the weapon from my

hand, and the madness from my mind. I shuddered at what I had escaped—I blessed God for my deliverance—and with the gratitude and the awe came repentance—and repentance brought a resolution to fly, since I could not wrestle with my mighty and dread temptation;—the moment that resolution was formed, it was as if an incubus were taken from my breast. Even the next morning I did not return home—my anxiety for you was such that I forgot all caution—I went to your house myself—I saw one of your servants to whom I was personally unknown. I inquired respecting you, and learned that your wound had not been mortal, and that the servant had overheard one of the medical attendants say you were not even in danger.

"At this news I felt the serpent stir again within me, but I resolved to crush it at the first—I would not even expose myself to the temptation of passing by Isora's house—I went straight in search of my horse—I mounted, and fled resolutely from the scene of my soul's peril. 'I will go,' I said, 'to the home of our childhood—I will surround myself by the mute tokens of the early love which my brother bore me—I will think—while penance and prayer cleanse my soul from its black guilt—I will think that I am also making a sacrifice to that brother.'

"I returned then to Devereux Court, and I resolved to forego all hope—all persecution of Isora! My brother—my brother, my heart yearns to you at this moment, even though years and distance, and above all, my own crimes, place a gulf between us which I may never pass,—it yearns to you when I think of those quiet shades, and the scenes where, pure and unsullied, we wandered together, when life was all verdure and freshness, and we dreamed not of what was to come! If even now my heart yearns to you, Morton, when I think of that home and those days, believe that it had some softness and some mercy for you then. Yes, I repeat, I resolved to subdue my own emotions, and interpose no longer between Isora and yourself. Full of this determination, and utterly melted towards you, I wrote you a long letter, such as we would have written to each other in our first youth. Two days after that letter, all my new purposes were swept away, and the whole soil of evil thoughts which they had covered, not destroyed, rose again as the tide flowed from it, black and rugged as before.

"The very night on which I had written that letter, came Montreuil secretly to my chamber. He had been accus-

turned to visit Gerald by stealth and at sudden moments; and there was something almost supernatural in the manner in which he seemed to pass from place to place, unmolested and unseen. He had now conceived a villanous project; and he had visited Devereux Court in order to ascertain the likelihood of its success; he there found that it was necessary to involve me in his scheme. My uncle's physician had said privately that Sir William could not live many months longer. Either from Gerald or my mother, Montreuil learned this fact; and he was resolved, if possible, that the family estates should not glide from all chance of his influence over them into your possession. Montreuil was literally as poor as the rigid law of his order enjoins its disciples to be; all his schemes required the disposal of large sums, and in no private source could he hope for such pecuniary power as he was likely to find in the coffers of any member of our family—yourself only excepted. It was this man's boast to want, and yet to command, all things; and he was now determined that if any craft, resolution or guilt, could occasion the transfer of my uncle's wealth from you to Gerald or to myself, it should not be wanting. Now then he found the advantage of the dissentions with each other, which he had either sown or mellowed in our breasts.

"He came to turn those wrathful thoughts, which, when he last saw me, I had expressed towards you, to the favour and success of his design. He found my mind strangely altered, but he affected to applaud the change. He questioned me respecting my uncle's health, and I told him what had really occurred, viz. that my uncle had, on the preceding day, read over to me some part of a will which he had just made, and in which the vast bulk of his property was bequeathed to you. At this news Montreuil must have perceived at once the necessity of winning my consent to his project, for since I had seen the actual testament, no fraudulent transfer of the property therein bequeathed could take place without my knowledge that some fraud had been recurred to. Montreuil knew me well—he knew that avarice, that pleasure, that ambition, were powerless words with me, producing no effect and affording no temptation; but he knew that passion, jealousy, spiritual terrors, were the springs that moved every part and nerve of my moral being. The two former he now put into action—the last he held back in reserve. He spoke to me no further upon the subject he had then at heart;

not a word further on the disposition of the estates—he spoke to me only of Isora and of you; he aroused, by hint and insinuation, the new sleep into which all those emotions—the furies of the heart—had been for a moment lulled. He told me he had lately seen Isora—he dwelt glowingly on her beauty—he commended my heroism in resigning her to a brother whose love for her was little in comparison to mine—who had, in reality, never loved *me* —whose jests and irony had been levelled no less at myself than at others. He painted your person and your mind, in contrast to my own, in colours so covertly depreciating as to excite more and more, that vanity with which jealousy is so woven, and from which, perhaps, (a Titan son of so feeble a parent) it is born. He hung lingeringly over all the treasure that you would enjoy,—and that I—I, the first discoverer, had so nobly, and so generously relinquished.

"'Relinquished!' I cried, 'no, I was driven from it, I left it not while a hope of possessing it remained.' The priest affected astonishment.—'How! was I sure of that? I had, it is true, wooed Isora, but would she, even if she had felt no preference for Morton, would she have surrendered the heir to a princely wealth, for the humble love of the younger son? I did not know women—with them all love was either wantonness, custom, or pride—it was the last principle that swayed Isora. Had I sought to enlist it on my side?—not at all. Again, I had only striven to detach Isora from Morton; had I ever attempted the much easier task of detaching Morton from Isora? No, never;' and Montreuil repeated his panegyric on my generous surrender of my rights. I interrupted him; 'I had not surrendered—I never would surrender while a hope remained. But, where was that hope, and how was it to be realized?' After much artful prelude, the priest explained. He proposed to use every means to array against your union with Isora, all motives of ambition, interest, and aggrandizement. 'I know Morton's character,' said he, 'to its very depths. His chief virtue is honour—his chief principle is ambition. He will not attempt to win this girl otherwise than by marriage, for the very reasons that would induce most men to attempt it, viz. her unfriended state, her poverty, her confidence in him, and her love, or that semblance of love, which he believes to be the passion itself. This virtue—I call it so, though it is none, for there is no virtue but religion—this virtue then

will place before him only two plans of conduct either to marry her or to forsake her. Now then, if we can bring his ambition, that great lever of his conduct, in opposition to the first alternative, only the last remains; I say that we *can* employ that engine in your behalf—leave it to me, and I will do so. Then, Aubrey, in the moment of her pique—her resentment—her outraged vanity, at being thus left, you shall appear: not as you have hitherto done, in menace and terror, but soft—subdued—with looks all love—with vows all penitence—vindicating all your past vehemence, by the excess of your passion, and promising all future tenderness by the influence of the same motive, the motive which, to a woman, pardons every error, and hallows every crime. Then will she contrast your love with your brother's—then will the scale fall from her eyes—then will she see what hitherto she has been blinded to, that your brother, to yourself, is a satyr to Hyperion—then will she blush and falter, and hide her cheek in your bosom.'—'Hold, hold!' I cried; 'do with me what you will, counsel, and I will act!' "

Here again the manuscript was defaced by a sudden burst of execration upon Montreuil, followed by ravings that gradually blackened into the most gloomy and incoherent outpourings of madness; at length, the history proceeded.

"You wrote to ask me to sound our uncle on the subject of your intended marriage. Montreuil drew up my answer, and I constrained myself, despite my revived hatred to you, to transcribe its expressions of affection; my uncle wrote to you also: and we strengthened his dislike to the step you had proposed, by hints from myself disrespectful to Isora, and an anonymous communication dated from London, and to the same purport. All this while I knew not that Isora had been in your house; your answer to my letter seemed to imply that you would not disobey my uncle. Montreuil, who was still lurking in the neighbourhood, and who, at night, privately met or sought me, affected exultation at the incipient success of his advice. He pretended to receive perpetual intelligence of your motions and conduct, and he informed me now, that Isora had come to your house on hearing of your wound; that you had not (agreeable, Montreuil added, to his view of your character,) taken advantage of her indiscretion;

that immediately on receiving your uncle's letter, and my own, you had separated yourself from her; and that, though you still visited her, it was apparently with a view of breaking off all connexion by gradual and gentle steps; at all events, you had taken no measures towards marriage. 'Now then,' said Montreuil, 'for one finishing stroke, and the prize is yours. Your uncle cannot, you find, live long: could he but be persuaded to leave his property to Gerald or to you, with only a trifling legacy (comparatively speaking,) to Morton, that worldly-minded and enterprising person would be utterly prevented from marrying a pennyless and unknown foreigner. Nothing but his own high prospects, so utterly above the necessity of fortune in a wife, can excuse such a measure now, even to his own mind; if, therefore, we can effect this transfer of property and in the meanwhile prevent Morton from marrying, your rival is gone for ever, and with his brilliant advantages of wealth, will also vanish his merits in the eyes of Isora Do not be startled at this thought, there is no vice in it, I your confessor, your tutor, the servant of God, am the last person to counsel, to hint, even, at what is criminal; but the end sanctifies all means. By transferring this vast property, you do not only ensure your object, but you advance the great cause of Kings, the Church, and of the Religion which presides over both. Wealth, in Morton's possession, will be useless to this cause, perhaps pernicious: in your hands or in Gerald's, it will be of inestimable service. Wealth produced from the public should be applied to the uses of the public, yea, even though a petty injury to one individual be the price.'

"Thus, and in this manner, did Montreuil prepare my mind for the step he meditated; but I was not yet ripe for it. So inconsistent is guilt, that I could commit murder —wrong—almost all villany that passion dictated, but I was struck aghast by the thought of fraud. Montreuil perceived that I was not yet wholly his, and his next plan was to remove me from a spot where I might check his measures. He persuaded me to travel for a few weeks. 'On your return,' said he, 'consider Isora yours; meanwhile, let change of scene beguile suspense.' I was passive in his hands, and I went whither he directed.

"Let me be brief here on the black fraud that ensued. Among the other arts of Jean Desmarais, was that of copying exactly any handwriting. He was then in London in your service: Montreuil sent for him to come to

the neighbourhood of Devereux Court. Meanwhile, the priest had procured from the notary who had drawn up, and who now possessed, the will of my unsuspecting uncle, that document. The notary had been long known to, and sometimes politically employed by, Montreuil, for he was half-brother to that Oswald, whom I have before mentioned as the early comrade of the priest and Desmarais. This circumstance, it is probable, first induced Montreuil to contemplate the plan of a substituted will. Before Desmarais arrived, in order to copy those parts of the will which my uncle's humour had led him to write in his own hand, you, alarmed by a letter from my uncle, came to the Court, and on the same day Sir William (taken ill the preceding evening) died. Between that day and the one on which the funeral occurred, the will was copied by Desmarais; only Gerald's name was substituted for yours, and the forty thousand pounds left to him—a sum equal to that bestowed on myself—was cut down into a legacy of twenty thousand pounds to you. Less than this, Montreuil dared not insert as the bequest to you; and it is possible, that the same regard to probabilities prevented all mention of himself in the substituted will. This was all the alteration made. My uncle's writing was copied exactly; and, save the departure from his apparent intentions in your favour, I believe not a particle in the effected fraud was calculated to excite suspicion. Immediately on the reading of the will, Montreuil repaired to me, and confessed what had taken place.

"'Aubrey,' he said, 'I have done this for your sake partly; but I have had a much higher end in view than even your happiness, or my affectionate wishes to promote it. I live solely for one object—the aggrandizement of that holy order to which I belong; the schemes of that order are devoted only to the interest of heaven, and by serving them, I serve heaven itself. Aubrey, child of my adoption and of my earthly hopes, those schemes require carnal instruments, and work, even through Mammon, unto the goal of righteousness. What I have done, is just before God and man. I have wrested a weapon from the hand of an enemy, and placed it in the hand of an ally. I have not touched one atom of this wealth, though, with the same ease with which I have transferred it from Morton to Gerald, I might have made my own private fortune. I have not touched one atom of it; nor for you, whom I love more than any living being, have I done what my heart

dictated. I might have caused the inheritance to pass to you. I have not done so. Why? Because, then, I should have consulted a selfish desire at the expense of the interests of mankind. Gerald is fitter to be the tool those interests require than you are. Gerald I have made that tool. You, too, I have spared the pangs which your conscience, so peculiarly, so morbidly acute, might suffer at being selected as the instrument of a seeming wrong to Morton. All required of you is silence. If your wants ever ask more than your legacy, you have, as I have, a claim to that wealth which your pleasure allows Gerald to possess. Meanwhile, let us secure to you that treasure, dearer to you than gold.'

"If Montreuil did not quite blind me by speeches of this nature, my engrossing, absorbing passion, required little to make it cling to any hope of its fruition. I assented, therefore, though not without many previous struggles, to Montreuil's project, or rather to its concealment; nay, I wrote some time after, at his desire, and his dictation, a letter to you, stating feigned reasons for my uncle's alteration of former intentions, and exonerating Gerald from all connivance in that alteration, or abetment in the fraud you professed that it was your open belief had been committed. This was due to Gerald; for at that time, and for aught I know, at the present, he was perfectly unconscious by what means he had attained his fortune; he believed that your love for Isora had given my uncle offence, and hence your disinheritance; and Montreuil took effectual care to exasperate him against you, by dwelling on the malice which your suspicions and your proceedings against him, so glaringly testified. Whether Montreuil really thought you would give over all intention of marrying Isora upon your reverse of fortune, which is likely enough from his estimate of your character, or whether he only wished by any means, to obtain my acquiescence in a measure important to his views, I know not, but he never left me, nor ever ceased to sustain my fevered and unhallowed hopes, from the hour in which he first communicated to me the fraudulent substitution of the will, till we repaired together to London. This we did not do, so long as he could detain me in the country, by assurances that I should ruin all by appearing before Isora until you had entirely deserted her.

"Morton, hitherto I have written as if my veins were filled with water, instead of the raging fire that flows

through them, until it reaches my brain, and there it stops, and eats away all things—even memory, that once seemed eternal. Now I feel as I approach the consummation of—Ha—of what—ay, of what? Brother, did you ever, when you thought yourself quite alone—at night—not a breath stirring—did you ever raise your eyes, and see, exactly opposite to you, a devil!—a dread thing, that moves not, speaks not, but glares upon you with a fixed, dead, unrelenting eye?—that thing is before me now, and witnesses every word I write. But it deters me not! no, nor terrifies me. I have said that I would fulfil this task, and I have nearly done it; though at times the gray cavern yawned, and I saw its rugged walls stretch—stretch away, on either side, until they reached hell; and there I beheld—but I will not tell you, till *we meet there!* Now I am calm again—read on.

"We could not discover Isora, nor her home; perhaps the priest took care that it should be so; for at that time, what with his devilish whispers and my own heart, I often scarcely knew what I was, or what I desired; and I sat for hours and gazed upon the air, and it seemed so soft and still, that I longed to make an opening in my forehead that it might enter there, and so cool and quiet the dull, throbbing, scorching anguish, that lay like molten lead in my brain; at length we found the house. 'To-morrow,' said the Abbé, and he shed tears over me—for there were times when that hard man did feel;—'to-morrow, my child, thou shalt see her—but be soft and calm.' The morrow came; but Montreuil was pale, paler than I had ever seen him, and he gazed upon me and said, 'Not to-day, son, not to-day; she has gone out, and will not return till nightfall.' My brother, the evening came, and with it came Desmarais; he came in terror and alarm. 'The villain Oswald,' he said, 'has betrayed all; he drew me aside and told me so.' 'Harkye, Jean,' he whispered, 'harkye—your master has my brother's written confession, and the real will; but I have provided for your safety, and if he pleases it, for Montreuil's. The packet is not to be opened till the seventh day—fly before then. But I know,' added Desmarais, 'where the packet is placed;' and he took Montreuil aside, and for a while I heard not what they said; but I did overhear Desmarais at last, and I learned that it was your *bridal night.*

"What felt I then? The same tempestuous fury—the same whirlwind and storm of heart that I had felt before,

at the mere anticipation of such an event? No; I felt a bright ray of joy flash through me. Yes, joy; but it was that joy which a conqueror feels when he knows his mortal foe is in his power, and when he dooms that enemy to death. 'They shall perish—and on this night,' I said, inly. 'I have sworn it—I swore to Isora that the bridal couch should be stained with blood, and I will keep the oath!' I approached the pair—they were discussing the means for obtaining the packet. Montreuil urged Desmarais to purloin it from the place where you had deposited it, and then to abscond; but to this plan Desmarais was vehemently opposed. He insisted that there would be no possible chance of his escape from a search so scrutinizing as that which would necessarily ensue, and he was evidently resolved not *alone* to incur the danger of the *theft*. 'The Count,' said he, 'saw that I was present when he put away the packet. Suspicion will fall solely on me. Whither should I fly? No—I will serve you with my talents, but not with my life.' 'Wretch!' said Montreuil, 'if that packet is opened, thy life is already gone.'—'Yes,' said Desmarais; 'but we may yet purloin the papers, and throw the guilt upon some other quarter. What if I admit you when the Count is abroad? What if you steal the packet, and carry away other articles of more seeming value? What, too, if you wound *me* in the arm or the breast, and I coin some terrible tale of robbers, and of my resistance, could we not manage then to throw suspicion upon common housebreakers—nay, could we not throw it upon Oswald himself? Let us silence that traitor by death, and who shall contradict our tale? No danger shall attend this plan. I will give you the key of the escritoire—the theft will not be the work of a moment.' Montreuil at first demurred to this proposal, but Desmarais was, I repeat, resolved not to incur the danger of the theft alone; the stake was great, and it was not Montreuil's nature to shrink from peril, when once it became necessary to confront it. 'Be it so,' he said, at last, 'though the scheme is full of difficulty and of danger: be it so. We have not a day to lose. To-morrow the Count will place the document in some place of greater safety, and unknown to us—the deed shall be done to-night. Procure the key of the escritoire—admit me this night—I will steal disguised into the chamber—I will commit the act from which you, who alone could commit it with safety, shrink. Instruct me exactly as to the place where the articles you speak of are

placed: I will abstract them also. See, that if the Count wake, he has no weapon at hand. Wound yourself, as you say, in some place not dangerous to life, and to-morrow, or within an hour after my escape, tell what tale you will. I will go, meanwhile, at once to Oswald; I will either bribe his silence—ay, and his immediate absence from England—or he shall die. A death that procures our own self-preservation is excusable in the reading of all law, divine or human!'

"I heard, but they deemed me insensible: they had already begun to grow unheeding of my presence. Montreuil saw me, and his countenance grew soft. 'I know all,' I said, as I caught his eye which looked on me in pity, 'I know all—they are married. Enough! with my hope ceases my love: care not for me.'

"Montreuil embraced, and spoke to me in kindness and in praise. He assured me that you had kept your wedding so close a secret, that he knew it not, nor did even Desmarais, till the evening before—till after he had proposed that I should visit Isora that very day. I know not, I care not, whether he was sincere in this. In whatever way one line in the dread scroll of his conduct be read, the scroll was written in guile, and in blood was it sealed. I appeared not to notice Montreuil or his accomplice any more. The latter left the house first. Montreuil stole forth, as he thought, unobserved; he was masked, and in complete disguise. I, too, went forth. I hastened to a shop where such things were procured; I purchased a mask and cloak similar to the priest's. I had heard Montreuil agree with Desmarais that the door of the house should be left ajar, in order to give greater facility to the escape of the former; I repaired to the house in time to see Montreuil enter it. A strange, sharp sort of cunning, which I had never known before, ran through the dark confusion of my mind. I waited for a minute, till it was likely that Montreuil had gained your chamber; I then pushed open the door and ascended the stairs. I met no one—the moonlight fell around me, and its rays seemed to me like ghosts, pale and shrouded, and gazing upon me with wan and lustreless eyes. I know not how I found your chamber, but it was the only one I entered. I stood in the same room with Isora and yourself—ye lay in sleep—Isora's face——. O, God! I know no more—no more of that night of horror—save that I fled from the house reeking with blood—a murderer—and the murderer of Isora!

"Then came a long, long dream. I was in a sea of blood—blood-red was the sky, and one still, solitary star, that gleamed far away with a sickly and wan light, was the only spot, above and around, which was not of the same intolerable dye. And I thought my eyelids were cut off, as those of the Roman consul are said to have been, and I had nothing to shield my eyes from that crimson light, and the rolling waters of that unnatural sea. And the red air burned through my eyes into my brain, and then that also, methought, became blood; and all memory—all images of memory—all idea—wore a material shape and a material colour, and were blood, too. Every thing was unutterably silent, except when my own shrieks rang over the shoreless ocean, as I drifted on. At last I fixed my eyes—the eyes which I might never close—upon that pale and single star; and after I had gazed a little while, the star seemed to change slowly—slowly—until it grew like the pale face of that murdered girl, and then it vanished, utterly, and *all* was blood.

"This vision was sometimes broken—sometimes varied by others—but it always returned; and when at last I completely woke from it, I was in Italy in a convent. Montreuil had lost no time in removing me from England. But once, shortly after my recovery, for I was mad for many months, he visited me, and he saw what a wreck I had become. He pitied me; and when I told him I longed above all things for liberty—for the green earth and the fresh air, and a removal from that gloomy abode, he opened the convent gates, and blessed me, and bade me go forth. 'All I require of you,' said he, 'is a promise. If it is understood that you live, you will be persecuted by inquiries and questions, which will terminate in a conviction of your crime; let it therefore be reported in England that you are dead. Consent to the report, and promise never to quit Italy, or to see Morton Devereux.'

"I promised—and that promise I have kept; but I promised not that I would never reveal to you, in writing, the black tale which I have now recorded. May it reach you. There is one in this vicinity, who has promised to bear it to you; he says he has known misery—and when he said so, his voice sounded in my ears like yours; and I looked upon him, and thought his features were cast somewhat in the same mould as your own—so I have trusted him. I have now told all. I have wrenched the secret from my heart in agony and with fear. I have told all—though

things which I believe are fiends, have started forth from the grim walls around to forbid it—though dark wings have swept by me, and talons, as of a bird, have attempted to tear away the paper on which I write—though eyes whose light was never drunk from earth have glared on me—and mocking voices and horrible laughter have made my flesh creep, and thrilled through the marrow of my bones—I have told all—I have finished my last labour in this world, and I will now lie down and die.

"AUBREY DEVEREUX."

The paper dropped from my hands. Whatever I had felt in reading it, I had not flinched once from the task. From the first word even to the last, I had gone through the dreadful tale, nor uttered a syllable, nor moved a limb. And now as I rose, though I had found the being who to me had withered this world into one impassable desert—though I had found the unrelenting foe, and the escaped murderer of Isora—the object of the execration and vindictiveness of years—not one single throb of wrath—not one single sentiment of vengeance, was in my breast. I passed at once to the bedside of my brother; he was awake, but still and calm—the calm and stillness of exhausted nature. I knelt down quietly beside him. I took his hand, and I shrunk not from the touch, though by that hand the only woman I ever loved, had perished.

"Look up, Aubrey!" said I, struggling with tears, which, despite of my most earnest effort, came over me; "look up, all is forgiven. Who on earth shall withhold pardon for a crime, which on earth has been so awfully punished? Look up, Aubrey; I am your brother, and I forgive you. You are right—my childhood *was* harsh and fierce; and had you feared me less, you might have confided in me, and you would not have sinned and suffered as you have done now. Fear me no longer. Look up, Aubrey, it is Morton who calls you. Why do you not speak? My brother, my brother—a word, a single word, I implore you."

For one moment did Aubrey raise his eyes—one moment did he meet mine. His lips quivered wildly—I heard the death-rattle—he sunk back, and his hand dropped from my clasp. My words had snapped asunder the last chord of life. Merciful Heaven! I thank thee that those words were the words of pardon.

CHAPTER V

In which the History makes a great stride towards the final Catastrophe—The return to England, and the visit to a Devotee.

At night, and in the thrilling forms of the Catholic ritual, was Aubrey Devereux consigned to earth. After the ceremony I could linger no longer in the vicinity of the hermitage. I took leave of the abbot, and richly endowed his convent in return for the protection it had afforded to the anchorite, and the masses which had been said for his soul. Before I left Anselmo, I questioned him if any friend to the hermit had ever, during his seclusion, held any communication with the abbot respecting him. Anselmo, after a little hesitation, confessed that a man, a Frenchman, seemingly of no high rank, had several times visited the convent, as if to scrutinize the habits and life of the anchorite; he had declared himself commissioned by the hermit's relatives to make inquiry of him from time to time; but he had given the abbot no clue to discover himself, though Anselmo had especially hinted at the expediency of being acquainted with some quarter to which he could direct any information of change in the hermit's habits or health. This man had been last to the convent about two months before the present date; but one of the brothers declared that he had seen him in the vicinity of the well on the very day on which the hermit died. The description of this stranger was essentially different from that which would have been given of Montreuil, but I imagined that if not the Abbé himself the stranger was one in his confidence or his employ.

I now repaired to Rome, where I made the most extensive, though guarded inquiries after Montreuil, and at length I learned that he was lying concealed, or rather unnoticed, in England, under a disguised name; having, by friends, or by money, obtained therein a tacit connivance, though not an open pardon. No sooner did I learn this intelligence, than I resolved forthwith to depart to that country. I crossed the Alps—traversed France—and took ship at Calais for Dover.

Behold me then upon the swift seas bent upon a double purpose—reconciliation with a brother whom I had wronged, and vengeance—no, not vengeance, but *justice* against the criminal I had discovered! No! it was not revenge—it was no infuriate, no unholy desire of inflicting punishment upon a personal foe, which possessed me—it was a steady, calm, unwavering resolution, to obtain justice against the profound and systematized guilt of a villain who had been the bane of all who had come within his contact, that nerved my arm and engrossed my heart. Bear witness, Heaven, I am not a vindictive man! I have, it is true, been extreme in hatred, as in love; but I have ever had the power to control myself from yielding to its impulse. When the full persuasion of Gerald's crime reigned within me, I had thralled my emotion, I had curbed it within the circle of my own heart, though there, thus pent and self-consuming, it was an agony and a torture; I had resisted the voice of that blood which cried from the earth against a murderer, and which had consigned the solemn charge of justice to my hands. Year after year I had nursed an unappeased desire; nor ever, when it stung the most, suffered it to become an actual revenge. I had knelt in tears and in softness by Aubrey's bed—I had poured forth my pardon over him—I had felt, while I did so, no, not so much sternness as would have slain a worm. By his hand had the murtherous stroke been dealt—on his soul was the crimson stain of that blood which had flowed through the veins of the gentlest and the most innocent of God's creatures—and yet the blow was unavenged and the crime forgiven. For him there was a palliative, or even a gloomy but an unanswerable excuse. In the confession which had so terribly solved the mystery of my life, the seeds of that curse, which had grown at last into MADNESS, might be discovered even in the first dawn of Aubrey's existence. The latent poison might be detected in the morbid fever of his young devotion—in his jealous cravings of affection—in the first flush of his ill-omened love, even before rivalship and wrath began. Then, too, his guilt had not been regularly organized into one cold and deliberate system—it broke forth in impetuous starts, in frantic paroxysms—it was often wrestled with, though by a feeble mind—it was often conquered by a tender, though a fitful temper—it might not have rushed into the last and most awful crime, but for the damning instigation and the atrocious craft of one, who (Aubrey rightly said) could wield

and mould the unhappy victim at his will. Might not, did I say? Nay, but for Montreuil's accursed influence, had I not Aubrey's own word that that crime never *would have* been committed? He had resolved to stifle his love—his heart had already melted to Isora and to me—he had already tasted the sweets of a virtuous resolution, and conquered the first bitterness of opposition to his passion. Why should not the resolution thus auspiciously begun have been mellowed into effect? Why should not the grateful and awful remembrance of the crime he had escaped continue to preserve him from meditating crime anew? And (O, thought, which, while I now write, steals over me and brings with it an unutterable horde of emotions) but for that all-tainting, all-withering influence, Aubrey's soul might at this moment have been pure from murder, and Isora, the living Isora, by my side.

What wonder, as these thoughts came over me, that sense, feeling, reason, gradually shrunk and hardened into one stern resolve? I looked as from a height over the whole conduct of Montreuil: I saw him in our early infancy with (beyond the general policy of intrigue) no definite motive, no fixed design, which might somewhat have lessened the callousness of the crime, not only fomenting dissentions in the hearts of brothers—not only turning the season of warm affections and yet of unopened passion, into strife and rancour—but seizing upon the inherent and reigning vice of our bosoms, which he should have seized to crush—in order only by that master vice to weave our characters and sway our conduct to his will, whenever a cool-blooded and merciless policy required us to be of that will the minions and the tools. Thus had he taken hold of the diseased jealousy of Aubrey, and by that handle, joined to the later spring of superstition, guided him on his wretched course of misery and guilt. Thus, by a moral irresolution in Gerald had he bowed him also to his purposes, and by an infantine animosity between that brother and myself, held us both in a state of mutual hatred which I shuddered to recall. Readily could I now perceive that my charges or my suspicions against Gerald, which, in ordinary circumstances, he might have dispassionately come forward to disprove, had been represented to him by Montreuil in the light of groundless and wilful insults; and thus he had been led to scorn that full and cool explanation which, if it had not elucidated the mystery of my afflictions, would have removed the false

suspicion of guilt from himself, and the real guilt of wrath and animosity from me.

The crime of the forged will, and the outrage to the dead and to myself, was a link in his woven guilt which I regarded the least. I looked rather to the black and the consummate craft by which Aubrey had been implicated in that sin; and my indignation became mixed with horror when I saw Montreuil working to that end of fraud by the instigation not only of a guilty and unlawful passion, but of the yet more unnatural and terrific engine of frenzy—of a maniac's despair. Over the peace—the happiness—the honour—the virtue of a whole family, through fraud and through blood, this priest had marched onward to the goal of his icy and heartless ambition, unrelenting and unrepenting; "but not," I said, as I clenched my hand till the nails met in the flesh, "not for ever unchecked and unrequited."

But in what manner was justice to be obtained? A public court of law? What, drag forward the deep dishonour of my house—the gloomy and convulsive history of my departed brother—his crime and insanity? What, bring that history, connected as it was with the fate of Isora, before the curious, and the insolent gaze of the babbling world? Bare that awful record to the jests, to the scrutiny, the marvel and the pity of that most coarse of all tribunals—an English court of law? and that most torturing of all exposures—the vulgar comments of an English public? Could I do this? Yea, in the sternness of my soul, I felt that I could submit even to that humiliation, if no other way presented itself by which I could arrive at justice. *Was* there no other way?—at that question conjecture paused—I formed no scheme, or rather, I formed a hundred and rejected them all; my mind settled, at last, into an indistinct, unquestioned, but prophetic resolution, that whenever my path crossed Montreuil's, it should be to the destruction of one of us. I asked not how, nor where, the blow was dealt; I felt only a solemn and exultant certainty, that whether it borrowed the sword of the law, or the weapon of private justice, *mine* should be the hand which brought retribution to the ashes of the dead, and the agony of the survivor.

So soon as my mind had subsided into this determination, I suffered my thoughts to dwell upon subjects less sternly agitating. Fondly did I look forward to a meeting with Gerald, and a reconciliation of all our early and

most frivolous disputes. As an atonement for the injustice my suspicions had done him, I resolved not to reclaim my inheritance. My fortune was already ample, and all that I cared to possess of the hereditary estates, were the ruins of the old house, and the copses of the surrounding park; these Gerald would in all likelihood easily yield to me: and with the natural sanguineness of my temperament, I already planned the reconstruction of the ancient building, and the method of that solitary life in which I resolved that the remainder of my years should be spent.

Turning from this train of thought, I recurred to the mysterious and sudden disappearance of Oswald: *that* I was now easily able to account for. There could be no doubt but that Montreuil had (immediately after the murder), as he declared he would, induced Oswald to quit England, and preserve silence, either by bribery or by threats. And when I recalled the impression which the man had made upon me—an impression certainly not favourable to the exaltation or the rigid honesty of his mind—I could not but imagine that one or the other of these means Montreuil found far from difficult of success. The delirious fever into which the wounds and the scene of that night had thrown me, and the long interval that consequently elapsed before inquiry was directed to Oswald, gave him every opportunity and indulgence in absenting himself from the country, and it was not improbable that he had accompanied Aubrey to Italy.

Here I paused, in deep acknowledgment of the truth of Aubrey's assertion, that "under similar circumstances, I might, perhaps, have been equally guilty." My passions had indeed been "intense and fierce as his own;" and there was a dread coincidence in the state of mind into which each of us had been thrown by the event of that night, which made the epoch of a desolate existence to both of us; if mine had been but a passing delirium, and his a confirmed and lasting disease of the intellect, the causes of our malady had been widely different. He had been the criminal—*I* only the sufferer!

Thus as I leaned over the deck, and the waves bore me homeward, after so many years and vicissitudes, did the shadows of thought and memory flit across me. How seemingly apart, yet how closely linked, had been the great events in my wandering and wild life. My early acquaintance with Bolingbroke, whom for more than nine years I had not seen, and who, at a superficial glance, would seem

to have exercised an influence over my public rather than my private life,—how secretly, yet how powerfully, had that circumstance led even to the very thoughts which now possessed me, and to the very object on which I was now bound. But for that circumstance, I might not have learned of the retreat of Don Diego D'Alvarez in his last illness; I might never have renewed my love to Isora, and whatever had been her fate, destitution and poverty would have been a less misfortune than her union with me. But for my friendship for Bolingbroke, I might not have visited France, nor gained the favour of the Regent, nor the ill offices of Dubois, nor the protection and kindness of the Czar. I might never have been ambassador at the Court of ——, nor met with Bezoni, nor sought an asylum for a spirit sated with pomp and thirsting for truth, at the foot of the Apennines, nor read that history (which, indeed, might then never have occurred,) that now rankled at my heart, urging my movements and colouring my desires. Thus, by the finest but the strongest meshes, had the thread of my political honours been woven with that of my private afflictions. And thus, even at the licentious festivals of the Regent of France, or the lifeless parade of the Court of ——, the dark stream of events had flowed onward beneath my feet, bearing me insensibly to that very spot of time, from which I now surveyed the past and looked upon the mist and shadows of the future.

Adverse winds made the little voyage across the Channel a business of four days. On the evening of the last we landed at Dover. Within thirty miles of that town was my mother's retreat; and I resolved, before I sought a reconciliation with Gerald, or justice against Montreuil, to visit her seclusion. Accordingly, the next day, I repaired to her abode.

What a contrast is there between the lives of human beings! Considering the beginning and the end of all mortal careers are the same, how wonderfully is the interval varied! Some, the weeds of the world, dashed from shore to shore—all vicissitude—enterprise—strife—disquiet; others, the world's lichen—rooted to some peaceful rock—growing—flourishing—withering on the same spot,—scarce a feeling exercised—scarce a sentiment called forth—scarce a tithe of the properties of their very nature expanded into action.

There was an air of quiet and stillness in the red quadrangular building, as my carriage stopped at its porch,

which struck upon me, like a breathing reproach to those who sought the abode of peace with feelings opposed to the spirit of the place. A small projecting porch was covered with ivy, and thence issued an aged portress in answer to my summons.

"The Countess Devereux," said she, "is now the superior of the society," (convent they called it not,) "and rarely admits any stranger."

I gave in my claim to admission, and was ushered into a small parlour: all there, too, was still—the brown oak wainscotting—the huge chairs—the few antique portraits—the *uninhabited* aspect of the chamber—all were silently eloquent of quietude—but a quietude comfortless and sombre. At length, my mother appeared, I sprung forward—my childhood was before me—years—care—change were forgotten—I was a boy again—I sprung forward, and was in my mother's embrace! It was long before recovering myself, I noted how lifeless and chill was that embrace, but I did so at last, and my enthusiasm withered at once.

We sat down together, and conversed long and uninterruptedly, but our conversation was like that of acquaintances, not the fondest and closest of all relations—(for I need scarcely add that I told her not of my meeting with Aubrey, nor undeceived her with respect to the date of his death). Every monastic recluse that I had hitherto seen, even in the most seeming content with retirement, had loved to converse of the exterior world, and had betrayed an interest in its events—for my mother only, worldly objects and interests seemed utterly dead. She expressed little surprise to see me—little surprise at my alteration; she only said that my mien was improved, and that I reminded her of my father; she testified no anxiety to hear of my travels or my adventures—she testified even no willingness to speak of herself—she described to me the life of one day, and then told me that the history of ten years was told. A close cap confined all the locks for whose rich luxuriance and golden hue she had once been noted—for here they were not the victim of a vow, as in a nunnery they would have been—and her dress was plain, simple, and unadorned: save these alterations of attire, none were visible in her exterior—the torpor of her life seemed to have paralyzed even time—the bloom yet dwelt in her unwrinkled cheek—the mouth had not fallen—the faultless features were faultless still. But there was a deeper stillness than ever breathing through this

frame: it was as if the soul had been lulled to sleep—her mien was lifeless—her voice was lifeless—her gesture was lifeless—the impression she produced was like that of entering some chamber which has not been entered before for a century. She consented to my request to stay with her all the day—a bed was prepared for me, and at sunrise the next morning, I was folded once more in the chilling mechanism of her embrace, and dismissed on my journey to the metropolis.

CHAPTER VI.

The Retreat of a celebrated Man, and a Visit to a great Poet.

I ARRIVED in town, and drove at once to Gerald's house: it was not difficult to find it, for in my young day it had been the residence of the Duke of ———; and wealthy as I knew was the owner of the Devereux lands, I was somewhat startled at the extent and the magnificence of his palace. To my inexpressible disappointment, I found that Gerald had left London a day or two before my arrival, on a visit to a nobleman nearly connected with our family, and residing in the same county as that in which Devereux Court was situated. Since the fire which had destroyed all of the old house but the one tower which I had considered as peculiarly my own, Gerald, I heard, had always, in visiting his estates, taken up his abode at the mansion of one or other of his neighbours; and to Lord ———'s house, I now resolved to repair. My journey was delayed for a day or two, by accidentally seeing at the door of the hotel, to which I drove from Gerald's house, the favourite servant of Lord Bolingbroke. This circumstance revived in me, at once, all my attachment to that personage, and hearing he was at his country house, within a few miles from town, I resolved the next morning to visit him. It was not only that I contemplated with an eager, yet a melancholy interest, an interview with one whose blazing career I had long watched, and whose letters (for, during the years we had been parted, he wrote to me often) seemed to testify the same satiety of the triumphs

and gauds of ambition which had brought something of wisdom to myself; it was not only that I wished to commune with that Bolingbroke in retirement, whom I had known the oracle of statesmen, and the pride of courts; nor even that I loved the man, and was eager once more to embrace him;—a fiercer and more active motive urged me to visit one whose knowledge of all men, and application of their various utilities were so remarkable, and who, even in his present peace and retirement, would, not improbably, be acquainted with the abode of that unquiet and plotting ecclesiastic whom I now panted to discover, and whom Bolingbroke had of old often guided or employed.

When my carriage stopped at the statesman's door, I was informed that Lord Bolingbroke was at his farm. Farm! how oddly did that word sound in my ear, coupled as it was with the name of one so brilliant and so restless. I asked the servant to direct me where I should find him, and following the directions, I proceeded to the search alone. It was a day towards the close of autumn, bright, soft, clear, and calm as the decline of a vigorous and genial age. I walked slowly through a field robbed of its golden grain, and as I entered another, I saw the object of my search. He had seemingly just given some orders to a person in a labourer's dress, who was quitting him, and with downcast eyes he was approaching towards me. I noted how slow and even was the pace which once stately, yet rapid and irregular, had betrayed the haughty but wild character of his mind. He paused often, as if in thought, and I observed that once he stopped longer than usual, and seemed to gaze wistfully on the ground. Afterward (when I had joined him) we passed that spot, and I remarked, with a secret smile, that it contained one of those little mounds in which that busy and herded tribe of the insect race, which have been held out to man's social state at once as a mockery and a model, held their populous home. There seemed a latent moral in the pause and watch of the disappointed statesman by that mound, which afforded a clue to the nature of his reflections.

He did not see me till I was close before him, and had called him by his name, nor did he at first recognise me, for my garb was foreign, and my upper lip unshaven; and, as I said before, years had strangely altered me. But when he did, he testified all the cordiality I had antici-

pated. I linked my arm in his, and we walked to and fro for hours, talking of all that had passed since and before our parting, and feeling our hearts warm to each other as we talked.

"The last time I saw you," said he, "how widely did our hopes and objects differ; yours from my own—you seemingly had the vantage ground, but it was an artificial eminence, and my level state, though it appeared less tempting, was more secure. I had just been disgraced by a misguided and ungrateful prince. I had already gone into a retirement, where my only honours were proportioned to my fortitude in bearing condemnation—and my only flatterer was the hope of finding a companion and a Mentor in myself. You, my friend, parted with life before you; and you only relinquished the pursuit of Fortune at one court, to meet her advances at another. Nearly ten years have flown since that time—my situation is but little changed—I am returned, it is true, to my native soil, but not to a soil more indulgent to ambition and exertion than the scene of my exile. My sphere of action is still shut from me—*my mind is still banished.** You return young in years, but full of successes. Have they brought you happiness, Devereux? or have you yet a temper to envy my content?"

"Alas!" said I, "who can bear too close a search beneath the mask and robe. Talk not of me now. It is ungracious for the fortunate to repine—and I reserve whatever may disquiet me within, for your future consolation and advice. At present speak to me of yourself—you are happy, then?"

"I am!" said Bolingbroke, emphatically.—"Life seems to me to possess two treasures—one glittering and precarious, the other of less rich a show, but of a more solid value. The one is Power, the other Virtue; and there is this main difference between the two—Power is intrusted to us as *a loan* ever required again, and with a terrible arrear of interest—Virtue obtained by us as a *boon* which we can only lose through our own folly, when once it is acquired. In my youth I was caught by the former—hence my errors and my misfortunes! In my declining years I have sought the latter; hence my palliatives and my consolation. But you have not seen my home and *all*

* I need scarcely remind the reader that Lord Bolingbroke, though he had received a full pardon, was forbidden to resume his seat in the house of Lords.—Ed.

its attractions," added Bolingbroke with a smile, which reminded me of his former self. "I will show them to you." And we turned our steps to the house.

As we walked thither, I wondered to find how little melancholy was the change Bolingbroke had undergone. Ten years, which bring man from his prime to his decay, had indeed left a potent trace upon his stately form, and the still unrivalled beauty of his noble features; but the manner gained all that the form had lost. In his days of more noisy greatness, there had been something artificial and unquiet in the sparkling alterations he had loved to assume. He had been too fond of changing wisdom by a quick turn into wit—too fond of the affectation of bordering the serious with the gay—the business with the pleasure. If this had not taken from the polish of his manner, it had diminished its dignity, and given it the air of being assumed and insincere. Now all was quiet, earnest, and impressive; there was tenderness even in what was melancholy: and if there yet lingered the affectation of blending the classic character with his own, the character was more noble, and the affectation more unseen. But this manner was only the faint mirror of a mind which, retaining much of its former mould, had been embellished and exalted by adversity, and which, if it banished not its former frailties, had acquired a thousand new virtues to redeem them

"You see," said my companion, pointing to the walls of the hall, which we had now entered, "the subject which at present occupies the greater part of my attention. I am meditating how to make the hall most illustrative of its owner's pursuits. You see the desire of improving, of creating, and of associating the improvement and the creation with ourselves, follows us banished men even to our seclusion. I think of having those walls painted with the implements of husbandry, and through pictures of spades, and ploughshares, to express my employments, and testify my content in them."

"Cincinnatus is a better model than Aristippus, confess it," said I, smiling. "But if the senators come hither to summon you to power, will you resemble the Roman, not only in being found at your plough, but in your reluctance to leave it, and your eagerness to return?"

"What shall I say to you?" replied Bolingbroke. "Will you play the cynic, if I answer *no?* We *should not* boast of despising power, when of use to others, but of being contented to live without it. This is the end of my philo-

sophy! But let me present you to one whom I value more now than I valued power at any time."

As he said this, Bolingbroke threw open the door of an apartment, and introduced me to a lady with whom he had found that domestic happiness denied him in his first marriage. The niece of Madame de Maintenon, this most charming woman possessed all her aunt's wit, and far more than all her aunt's beauty.* She was in weak health; but her vivacity was extreme, and her conversation just what should be the conversation of a woman who shines without striving for it.

The business on which I was bound only allowed me to stay two days with Bolingbroke, and this I stated at first, lest he should have dragged me over his farm. It is very odd to me, who think that on a great legislative scale, I am not quite ignorant of agricultural matters, how exceedingly ignorant I am of them on a small scale; and I really *do* hate oats and barley, when considered at so much per sack, with a very unphilosophical hatred.

"Well," said my host, after vainly endeavouring to induce me to promise a longer stay, "if you *can* only give us two days, I must write and excuse myself to a great man with whom I was to dine to-day: yet, if it were not so inhospitable, I should like much to carry you with me to his house; for I own that I wish you to see my companions, and to learn that if I still consult the oracles, they are less for the predictions of fortune than as the inspirations of the god."

"Ah!" said Lady Bolingbroke, who spoke in French, "I know whom you allude to. Give him my homage, and assure him, when he next visits us, we will appoint six *dames du palais* to receive and pet him."

Upon this I insisted upon accompanying Bolingbroke to the house of so fortunate a being, and he consented to my wish with feigned reluctance, but evident pleasure.

"And who," said I to Lady Bolingbroke, "is the happy object of so much respect?"

Lady Bolingbroke answered, laughing, that nothing was so pleasant as suspense, and that it would be cruel in her to deprive me of it; and we conversed with so much zest,

* "I am not ashamed to say to you that I admire her more every hour of my life."—*Letter from Lord Bolingbroke to Swift.*

Bolingbroke loved her to the last; and perhaps it is just to a man so celebrated for his gallantries, to add, that this beautiful and accomplished woman seems to have admired and *esteemed* as much as she loved him.—ED.

that it was not till Bolingbroke had left the room for some moments, that I observed he was not present. I took the opportunity to remark that I was rejoiced to find him so happy, and with such just cause for happiness.

"He *is* happy, though, at times, he is restless. How, chained to this oar, can he be otherwise?" answered Lady Bolingbroke, with a sigh: "but his friends," she added, "who must enjoy his retirement, must yet lament it. His genius is not wasted here, it is true: where *could* it be wasted? But who does not feel that it is employed in too confined a sphere. And yet—" and I saw a tear start to her eye—"I, at least, ought not to repine, I should lose the best part of my happiness if there was nothing I could console him for."

"Believe me," said I, "I have known Bolingbroke in the zenith of his success; but never knew him so worthy of congratulation as *now!*"

"Is that flattery to him or to me?" said Lady Bolingbroke, smiling archly, for her smiles were quick successors to her tears.

"*Detur digniori!*" answered I; "but you must allow, that, though it is a fine thing to have all that the world can give, it is still better to gain something that the world cannot take away?"

"*Et vous aussi êtes philosophe!*" cried Lady Bolingbroke, gayly. "Ah, poor me! In my youth, my portion was the cloister;* in my later years I am banished to *the porch!* You have no conception, Monsieur Devereux, what wise faces and profound maxims we have here; especially as all who come to visit my lord, think it necessary to quote Tully, and talk of solitude as if it were a heaven! *Les pauvres bons gens!* they seem a little surprised when Henry receives them smilingly—begs them to construe the Latin—gives them good wine, and sends them back to London with faces half the length they were on their arrival, *Mais voici Monsieur le fermier philosophe.*"

And Bolingbroke entering, I took my leave of this lively and interesting lady, and entered his carriage.

As soon as we were seated, he pressed me for my reasons for refusing to prolong my visit. As I thought they would be more opportune after the excursion of the day was over, and as, in truth, I was not eager to relate them, I begged to defer the narration till our return to his house

* She was brought up at St. Cyr.—Ed.

at night, and then I directed the conversation into a new channel.

"My chief companion," said Bolingbroke, after describing to me his course of life, "is the man you are about to visit: he has his frailties and infirmities—and in saying that, I only imply that he is human—but he is wise, reflective, generous, and affectionate; add these qualities to a dazzling wit, and a genius deep, if not sublime, and what wonder that we forget something of vanity and something of fretfulness—effects rather of the frame than of the mind; the wonder only is, that with a body the victim to every disease, crippled and imbecile from the cradle, his frailties should not be more numerous, and his care, his thoughts, and attentions not wholly limited to his own complaints—for the sickly are almost of necessity selfish—and that mind must have a vast share of benevolence, which can always retain the softness of charity and love for others, when pain and disease constitute the morbid links that perpetually bind it to self. If this great character is my chief companion, my chief correspondent is not less distinguished; in a word, no longer to keep you in suspense, Pope is my companion, and Swift my correspondent."

"You are fortunate—but so also are they. Your letter informed me of Swift's honourable exile in Ireland—how does he bear it?"

"Too feelingly—his disappointments turn his blood to acid. He said, characteristically enough, in one of his letters, that in fishing once when he was a little boy, he felt a great fish at the end of his line, which he drew up almost to the ground, but it dropped in, and the disappointment, he adds, vexes him to this day, and he believes it to be the type of all his future disappointments :* it is won-

* In this letter, Swift adds, "I should be ashamed to say this if you (Lord Bolingbroke) had not a spirit fitter to bear your own misfortunes than I have to think of them;" and this is true. Nothing can be more striking, or more honourable to Lord Bolingbroke, than the contrast between Swift's letters and that nobleman's upon the subject of their mutual disappointments. I especially note the contrast, because it has been so grievously the cant of Lord Bolingbroke's deriers to represent his affection for retirement as hollow, and his resignation in adversity as a boast rather than a fact. Now I will challenge any one *thoroughly* and dispassionately to examine what is left to us of the life of this great man, and after having done so, to select from all modern history an example of one who, in the prime of life and height of ambition, ever passed from a very active and exciting career into retirement and disgrace, and bore the change—long, bitter, and permanent as it was—with a greater and more thoroughly sustained magnanimity than Lord Bolingbroke. He has been reproached for taking part in political contest in the midst of his praises and

derful how reluctantly a very active mind sinks into rest."

"Yet why should retirement be rest? Do you recollect in the first conversation we ever had together, we talked of Cowley? Do you recollect how justly, and even sublimely, he has said 'Cogitation is that which distinguishes the solitude of a god from that of a wild beast?'"

"It is finely said," answered Bolingbroke, "but Swift was born not for cogitation, but action—for turbulent times, not for calm. He ceases to be great directly he is still; and his bitterness at every vexation is so great, that I have often thought, in listening to him, of the Abbé de Cyran, who, attempting to throw nutshells out of the bars of his window, and constantly failing in the attempt, exclaimed, in a paroxysm of rage, 'Thus does Providence delight in frustrating my designs!'"

"*But you have fallen from a far greater point of hope than Swift could ever have attained*—you bear the change well, but not, *I hope*, without a struggle."

"You are right—*not* without a struggle: while corruption thrives I will not be silent; while bad men govern, I will not be still."

In conversation of this sort passed the time, till we arrived at Pope's villa.

We found the poet in his study—indued, as some of his pictures represent him, in a long gown and a velvet cap. He received Bolingbroke with great tenderness, and being, as he said, in robuster health than he had enjoyed for months, he insisted on carrying us to his grotto. I know

"affected enjoyment" of retirement; and this, made matter of reproach, is exactly the subject on which he seems to me the *most* worthy of praise. For, putting aside all motives for action, on the purity of which men are generally incredulous, as a hatred to ill government (an antipathy wonderfully strong in wise men, and wonderfully weak in fools) the honest impulse of the citizen, and the better and higher sentiments to which Bolingbroke appeared peculiarly alive, of affection to mankind—putting these utterly aside—it must be owned that resignation is the more noble in proportion as it is the less passive—that retirement is only a morbid selfishness if it prohibit exertions for others; that it is only really dignified and noble when it is the shade whence issues the oracles that are to instruct mankind; and that retirement of this nature is the sole seclusion which a good and wise man will covet or commend. The very philosophy which makes such a man seek the *quiet*, makes him eschew the *inutility* of the hermitage. Very little praiseworthy to me would have seemed Lord Bolingbroke among his haymakers and ploughmen, if among haymakers and ploughmen he had looked with an indifferent eye upon a prodigate minister and a venal parliament; very little interest in my eyes would have attached itself to his beans and vetches, had beans and vetches caused him to forget that if he was happier in a farm, he could be more useful in a senate, and made him forego, in the sphere of a bailiff, all care for re-entering that of a legislator.—Ed.

nothing more common to poets, than a pride in what belongs to their house; and perhaps, to a man not ill-natured, there are few things more pleasant than indulging the little weaknesses of those we admire. We sat down in a small temple made entirely of shells; and whether it was that the Creative Genius gave an undue charm to the place, I know not: but as the murmur of a rill, glassy as the Blandusian fountain, was caught, and regiven from side to side by a perpetual echo, and through an arcade of trees, whose leaves, ever and anon, fell starflingly to the ground beneath the light touch of the autumn air, you saw the sails on the river pass and vanish, like the cares which breathe over the smooth glass of wisdom, but may not linger to dim it, it was not difficult to invest the place, humble as it was, with a classic interest, or to recall the loved retreats of the Roman bards, without smiling too fastidiously at the contrast.

"'Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell,
By slow Meander's margin green,
Or by the violet embroidered vale,
Where the lovelorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;
Sweet Echo, dost thou shun those haunts of yore,
And in the dim caves of a northern shore
Delight to dwell?'"

"Let the compliment to you, Pope," said Bolingbroke, "atone for the profanation of weaving three wretched lines of mine with those most musical notes of Milton."

"Ah!" said Pope, "would that you could give me a fitting inscription for my fount and grotto? The only one I can remember is hackneyed, and yet it has spoiled me, I fear, for all others.

"Hujus Nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis
Dormio dum blandæ sentio murmur aquæ;
Parce meum, quisquis tanges cava marmora, somnum
Rumpere; sive bibas, sive lavêre, tace."*

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* Thus very inadequately translated by Pope (See his Letter to Edward Blount, Esq. descriptive of his grotto).

"Nymph of the grot, these sacred springs I keep,
And to the murmur of these waters sleep:
Ah, spare my slumbers; gently tread the cave,
And drink in silence, or in silence lave!"

It is, however, quite impossible to convey to an unlearned reader the exquisite and spirit-like beauty of the Latin verses.—Ed.

"We cannot hope to match it," said Bolingbroke, "though you know I value myself on these things. But tell me your news of Gay—is he growing wiser?"

"Not a whit; he is for ever a dupe to the *spes credula;* always talking of buying an annuity, that he may be independent, and always spending as fast as he earns, that he may appear munificent."

"Poor Gay! but he is a common example of the improvidence of his tribe, while you are an exception. Yet mark, Devereux, the inconsistency of Pope's thrift and carefulness: he sends a parcel of fruit to some ladies with this note, 'Take care of the papers that wrap the apples, and return them safely; they are the only copies I have of one part of the Iliad.' Thus, you see, our economist saves his paper, and hazards his epic!"

Pope, who is always flattered by an allusion to his negligence of fame, smiled slightly and answered, "What man, alas, ever profits by the lessons of his friends? How many exact rules has our good Dean of St. Patrick's laid down for both of us—how angrily still does he chide us for our want of prudence and our love of good living. I intend, in answer to his charges on the latter score, though I vouch, as I well may, for our temperance, to give him the reply of the sage to the foolish courtier ——."

"What was that?" asked Bolingbroke.

"Why, the courtier saw the sage picking out the best dishes at table, 'How,' said he, with a sneer, 'are sages such epicures?'—'Do you think, Sir,' replied the wise man, reaching over the table to help himself, 'do you think, Sir, that God Almighty made the good things of this world only for fools?'"

"How the Dean will pish and pull his wig, when he reads your illustration," said Bolingbroke, laughing. "We shall never agree in our reasonings on that part of philosophy. Swift loves to go out of his way to find privation or distress, and has no notion of Epicurean wisdom; for my part, I think the use of knowledge is to make us happier. I would compare the mind to the beautiful statue of Love by Praxiteles—when its eyes were bandaged, the countenance seemed grave and sad, but the moment you removed the bandage, the most serene and enchanting smile diffused itself over the whole face."

So passed the morning, till the hour of dinner, and this

repast was served with an elegance and luxury* which *les fils d'Apollon* seldom command. As the evening closed, our conversation fell upon friendship, and the increasing disposition towards it which comes with increasing years. "While my mind," said Bolingbroke, "shrinks more and more from the world, and feels in its independence less yearning to external objects, the ideas of friendship return oftener, they busy me, they warm me more. Is it that we grow more tender as the moment of our great separation approaches? or is it that they who are to live together in another state (for friendship exists not but for the good) begin to feel more strongly that divine sympathy which is to be the great bond of their future society?"†

While Bolingbroke was thus speaking, and Pope listened with all the love and reverence which he evidently bore to his friend, stamped upon his worn but expressive countenance, I inly said, "Sure, the love between minds like these should live and last without the changes that ordinary affection feel! Who would not mourn for the strength of all human ties, if hereafter these are broken, and asperity succeed to friendship, or aversion to esteem? *I*, a wanderer, without heir to my memory and wealth, shall pass away, and my hasty and unmellowed fame will moulder with my clay; but will the names of those whom I now behold ever fall languidly on the ears of a future race, and will not there for ever be some sympathy with their friendship, softer and warmer than admiration for their fame!"

We left our celebrated host about two hours before midnight, and returned to Dawley.

On our road thither I questioned Bolingbroke respecting Montreuil, and I found that, as I had surmised, he was able to give me some information of that arch-schemer. Gerald's money and hereditary influence had procured tacit connivance at the Jesuit's residence in England, and he had for some years led a quiet and unoffending life, in close retirement. "Lately, however," said Bolingbroke, "I have learned that the old spirit has revived, and I accidentally heard, three days ago, when

* Pope seems to have been rather capricious in this respect; but in general he must be considered open to the sarcasm of displaying the bounteous host to those who did not want a dinner, and the niggard to those who did.—Ed.

† This beautiful sentiment is to be found, with very slight alteration, in a letter from Bolingbroke to Swift.—Ed.

conversing with one well informed on state matters, in this most pure administration have discovered some plot or plots with which Montreuil is connected; I believe he will be apprehended in a few days."

"And where lurks he?"

"He was, I heard, last seen in the neighbourhood of your brother's mansion at Devereux Court, and I imagine it probable that he is still in that neighbourhood."

This intelligence made me resolve to leave Dawley even earlier than I had intended, and I signified to Lord Bolingbroke my intention of quitting him by sunrise the next morning. He endeavoured in vain to combat my resolution. I was too fearful lest Montreuil, hearing of his danger from the state, might baffle my vengeance by seeking some impenetrable asylum, to wish to subject my meeting with him, and with Gerald, whose co-operation I desired, to any necessary delay. I took leave of my host therefore that night, and ordered my carriage to be in readiness by the first dawn of morning.

CHAPTER VII.

The Plot approaches its dénouement.

ALTHOUGH the details of my last chapter have somewhat retarded the progress of that *dénouement* with which these volumes are destined to close, yet I do not think the destined reader will regret lingering over a scene in which, after years of restless enterprise and long exile, he beholds the asylum which fortune had prepared for the most extraordinary character, with which I have adorned these pages. It was before daybreak that I commenced my journey. The shutters of the house were as yet closed; the gray mists rising slowly from the earth, and the cattle couched beneath the trees, the cold, but breezeless freshness of the morning, the silence of the unawakened birds, all gave an inexpressible stillness and quiet to the scene. The horses slowly ascended a little eminence, and I looked from the window of the carriage, on the peaceful retreat I had left. I sighed as I did so, and a sick sensation, coupled with the thought of Isora,

came chill upon my heart. No man, happily placed in this social world, can guess the feelings of envy with which a wanderer like me, without tie or home, and for whom the roving eagerness of youth is over, surveys those sheltered spots in which the breast garners up all domestic bonds, its household and holiest delights; the companioned hearth, the smile of infancy, and, dearer than all, the eye that glasses our purest, our tenderest, our most secret thoughts; these,—oh, none who enjoy them know how they for whom they are not have pined and mourned for them!

I had not travelled many hours, when, upon the loneliest part of the road, my carriage, which had borne me without an accident from Rome to London, broke down. The postilions said there was a small inn about a mile from the spot; thither I repaired: a blacksmith was sent for, and I found the accident to the carriage would require several hours to repair. No solitary chaise did the inn afford; but the landlord, who was a freeholder and a huntsman, boasted one valuable and swift horse, which he declared was fit for an emperor or a highwayman. I was too impatient of delay, not to grasp at this intelligence. I gave mine host whatever he demanded for the loan of his steed, transferred my pistols to an immense pair of holsters, which adorned a high demi-pique saddle, wherewith he obliged me, and, within an hour from the date of the accident, recommenced my journey.

The evening closed, as I became aware of the presence of a fellow-traveller. He was, like myself, on horseback. He wore a short, dark gray cloak, a long wig of a raven hue, and a large hat, which, flapping over his face, conspired, with the increasing darkness, to allow me a very imperfect survey of his features. Twice or thrice he had passed me, and always with some salutation, indicative of a desire for further acquaintance; but my mood is not naturally too much inclined to miscellaneous sociality, and I was at that time peculiarly covetous of my own companionship. I had, therefore, given but a brief answer to the horseman's courtesy, and had ridden away from him with a very unceremonious abruptness. At length, when he had come up to me for the fourth time, and for the fourth time had accosted me, my ear caught something in the tones of his voice, which did not seem to me wholly unfamiliar. I regarded him with more attention than I had as yet done, and replied to him more civilly and

at length. Apparently encouraged by this relaxation from my reserve, the man speedily resumed.

"Your horse, Sir," said he, "is a fine animal, but he seems jaded;—you have ridden far to-day, I 'll venture to guess."

"I have, Sir; but the town where I shall pass the night, is not above four miles distant, I believe."

"Hum—ha!—you sleep at D——, then?" said the horseman, inquisitively.

A suspicion came across me—we were then entering a very lonely road, and one notoriously infested with highwaymen. My fellow-equestrian's company might have some sinister meaning in it. I looked to my holsters, and leisurely taking out one of my pistols, saw to its priming, and returned it to its depository. The horseman noted the motion, and moved his horse rather uneasily, and I thought timidly, to the other side of the road.

"You travel well armed, Sir," said he, after a pause.

"It is a necessary precaution, Sir," answered I, composedly, "in a road one is not familiar with, and with companions one has never had the happiness to meet before."

"Ahem!—ahem!—*Parbleu, Monsieur le Compte*, you allude to me; but I warrant this is not the first time *we* have met."

"Ha!" said I, riding closer to my fellow-traveller, "you know me, then—and we *have* met before. I thought I recognised your voice, but I cannot remember when or where I last heard it."

"Oh, Count, I believe it was only by accident that we commenced acquaintanceship, and only by accident, you see, do we now resume it. But I perceive that I intrude on your solitude. Farewell, Count, and a pleasant night at your inn."

"Not so fast, Sir," said I, laying firm hand on my companion's shoulder, "I know you now, and I thank Providence that I have found you. Marie Oswald, it is not lightly that I will part with you!"

"With all my heart, Sir, with all my heart. But, *morbleu, Monsieur le Compte*, do take your hand from my shoulder—I am a nervous man, and your pistols are loaded—and perhaps you are choleric and hasty. I assure you I am far from wishing to part with you abruptly, for I have watched you for the last two days, in order to enjoy the honour of this interview."

"Indeed! your wish will save both of us a world of trouble. I believe you may serve me effectually—if so, you will find me more desirous and more able than ever to show my gratitude."

"Sir, you are too good," quoth Mr. Oswald, with an air far more respectful than he had yet shown me. "Let us make to your inn, and there I shall be most happy to receive your commands." So saying, Marie pushed on his horse, and I urged my own to the same expedition.

"But tell me," said I, as we rode on, "why you have wished to meet me?—me whom you so cruelly deserted and forsook?"

"Oh, *parbleu*—spare me there! it was not I who deserted you—I was compelled to fly—death—murder—on one side; safety, money, and a snug place in Italy, as a lay-brother of the Institute, on the other!—What could I do?—You were ill in bed—not likely to recover—not able to protect me from my present peril—in a state that in all probability never would require my services for the future. Oh, Monsieur le Compte, it was not desertion—that is a cruel word—it was self-preservation, and common prudence."

"Well," said I, complaisantly, "you apply words better than I applied them. And how long have you been returned to England?"

"Some few weeks, Count, not more. I was in London when you arrived—I heard of that event—I immediately repaired to your hotel—you were gone to my Lord Bolingbroke's—I followed you thither—you had left Dawley when I arrived there—I learned your route, and followed you. *Parbleu* and *morbleu*, I found you, and you took me for a highwayman."

"Pardon my mistake: the clearest-sighted men are subject to commit such errors, and the most innocent to suffer by them. So Montreuil *persuaded* you to leave England—did he also persuade you to return?"

"No—I was charged by the Institute with messages to him and others. But we are near the town, Count, let us defer our conversation till then."

We entered D——, put up our horses—called for an apartment—to which summons Oswald added another for wine—and then the virtuous *Marie* commenced his explanations. I was most deeply anxious to learn whether Gerald had ever been made acquainted with the fraud by which he had obtained possession of the estates of Deve-

reux; and I found that, from Desmarais, Oswald had learned all that had occurred to Gerald since Marie had left England. From Oswald's prolix communication, I ascertained that Gerald was, during the whole of the interval between my uncle's death and my departure from England, utterly unacquainted with the fraud of the will. He readily believed that my uncle had found good reason for altering his intentions with respect to me; and my law proceedings, and violent conduct towards himself, only excited his indignation, not aroused his suspicions. During this time, he lived entirely in the country, indulging the rural hospitality and the rustic sports which he especially affected, and secretly but deeply involved with Montreuil in political intrigues. All this time the Abbé made no farther use of him than to borrow whatever sums he required for his purposes. Isora's death, and the confused story of the document given me by Oswald, Montreuil had interpreted to Gerald according to the interpretation of the world; viz. he had thrown the suspicion upon Oswald, as a common villain, who had taken advantage of my credulity about the will—introduced himself into the house on that pretence—attempted the robbery of the most valuable articles therein—which, indeed, he had succeeded in abstracting—and who, on my awaking and contesting with him and his accomplice, had, in self-defence, inflicted the wounds which had ended in my delirium, and Isora's death. This part of my tale Montreuil never contradicted, and Gerald believed it to the present day. The affair of 1715 occurred; the government, aware of Gerald's practices, had anticipated his design of joining the rebels—he was imprisoned—no act of overt guilt on his part was proved, or at least brought forward—and the government, not being willing, perhaps, to proceed to violent measures against a very young man, and the head of a very powerful house, connected with more than thirty branches of the English hereditary noblesse, he received his acquittal just before Sir William Windham, and some other suspected tories, received their own.

Prior to the breaking out of that rebellion, and on the eve of Montreuil's departure for Scotland, the priest summoned Desmarais, whom, it will be remembered, I had previously dismissed, and whom Montreuil had since employed in various errands, and informed him that he had obtained, for his services, the same post under Gerald

which the Fatalist had filled under me. Soon after the failure of the rebellion, Devereux Court was destroyed by accidental fire; and Montreuil, who had come over in disguise, in order to renew his attacks on my brother's coffers, (attacks to which Gerald yielded very sullenly, and with many assurances that he would no more incur the danger of political and seditious projects,) now advised Gerald to go up to London, and, in order to avoid the suspicion of the government, to mix freely in the gayeties of the court. Gerald readily consented; for, though internally convinced that the charms of the metropolis were not equal to those of the country, yet he liked change, and Devereux Court being destroyed, he shuddered a little at the idea of rebuilding so enormous a pile. Before Gerald left the old tower (*my tower*) which was alone spared by the flames, and which he had managed to reside at, though without his household, rather than quit a place where there was "such excellent shooting," Montreuil said to Desmarais, "This ungrateful *seigneur du village* already betrays the niggard; he must know what *we* know —that is our only sure hold of him—but he must not know it yet," and he proceeded to observe, that it was for the hot-beds of courtly luxury to mellow and hasten an opportunity for the disclosure. He instructed Desmarais to see that Gerald, (whom even a valet, at least one so artful as Desmarais, might easily influence,) partook to excess of every pleasure,—at least of every pleasure which a gentleman might, without derogation to his dignity, enjoy. Gerald went to town, and very soon became all that Montreuil desired.

Montreuil came again to England; his great project, Alberoni's project, had failed. Banished France and Spain, and excluded Italy, he was desirous of obtaining an asylum in England, until he could negotiate a return to Paris. For the first of these purposes (the asylum) interest was requisite; for the latter (the negotiation) money was desirable. He came to seek both these necessaries in Gerald Devereux. Gerald had already arrived at that prosperous state when money is not lightly given away. A dispute arose; and Montreuil raised the veil, and showed the heir on what terms his estates were held.

Rightly Montreuil had read the human heart. So long as Gerald lived in the country, and tasted not the full enjoyments of his great wealth, it would have been highly

perilous to have made this disclosure; for, though he had no great love for me, and was bold enough to run any danger, yet he was neither a Desmarais nor a Montreuil. He was that most capricious thing, a man of honour; and, at that day, he would instantly have given up the estate to me, and Montreuil and the philosopher to the hangman. But, after two or three years of every luxury that wealth could purchase—after living in those circles too, where wealth is the highest possible merit, and public opinion, therefore, only honours the rich, fortune became far more valuable, and the conscience far less nice. Living at Devereux Court, Gerald had only £30,000 a year; living in London, he had all that £30,000 a year can purchase; a very great difference this indeed! Honour is a fine bulwark against a small force; but, unbacked by other principle, it is seldom well manned enough to resist a large one. When, therefore, Montreuil showed Gerald that he could lose his estate in an instant,—that the world would never give him credit for innocence, when guilt would have conferred on him such advantages—that he would therefore part with all those et cetera which, now in the very prime of life, made his whole idea of human enjoyments—that he would no longer be the rich, the powerful, the honoured, the magnificent, the envied, the idolized lord of thousands, but would sink at once into a younger brother, dependent on the man he most hated for his very subsistence—for his debts would greatly exceed his portion—and an object through life of contemptuous pity, or of shunning suspicion—that all this change could happen at a word of Montreuil's, what wonder that he should be staggered, hesitate, and yield. Montreuil obtained, then, whatever sums he required; and through Gerald's influence, pecuniary and political, procured from the minister a tacit permission for him to remain in England, under an assumed name, and in close retirement. Since then, Montreuil, though secretly involved in treasonable practices, had appeared to busy himself solely in negotiating a pardon at Paris. Gerald had lived the life of a man, who, if he has parted with peace of conscience, will make the best of the bargain by procuring every kind of pleasure in exchange; and *le petit* Jean Desmarais, useful to both priest and spendthrift, had passed his time very agreeably—laughing at his employers, studying philosophy, and filling his pockets; for I need scarcely add, that Gerald forgave him without much difficulty for his

share in the forgery. A man, as Oswald shrewdly observed, is seldom inexorable to those crimes by which he has profited. "And where lurks Montreuil now?" I asked; "in the neighbourhood of Devereux Court?"

Oswald looked at me with some surprise. "How learned you that, Sir? It is true. He lives quietly and privately in that vicinity. The woods around the house, the caves in the beach, and the little isle opposite the castle, afford him in turn an asylum; and the convenience with which correspondence with France can be there carried on, makes the scene of his retirement peculiarly adapted to his purposes."

I now began to question Oswald respecting himself; for I was not warmly inclined to place implicit trust in the services of a man who had before shown himself at once mercenary and timid. There was little cant or disguise about that gentleman; he made few pretences to virtues which he did not possess; and he seemed now, both by wine and familiarity, peculiarly disposed to be frank. It was he who in Italy had been, among various other and less private commissions, appointed by Montreuil to watch over Aubrey; on my brother's death, he had hastened to England, not only to apprise Montreuil of that event, but charged with some especial orders to him from certain members of the Institute. He had found Montreuil busy, restless, intriguing, even in seclusion, and cheered by a late promise from Fleuri himself, that he should speedily obtain pardon and recall. It was, at this part of Oswald's story, easy to perceive the causes of his renewed confidence in me. Montreuil, engaged in new plans and schemes, at once complicated and vast, paid but a slight attention to the wrecks of his past projects. Aubrey dead—myself abroad—Gerald at his command—he perceived, in our House, no cause for caution or alarm. This, apparently, had made him less careful of retaining the venal services of Oswald, than his knowledge of character should have made him; and when that gentleman, then in London, accidentally heard of my sudden arrival in this country, he at once perceived how much more to his interest it would be to serve me, than to maintain an ill-remunerated fidelity to Montreuil. In fact, as I have since learned, the priest's discretion was less to blame than I then imagined; for Oswald was of a remarkably impudent, profligate, and spendthrift turn; and his demands for money were con-

siderably greater than the value of his services; or perhaps, as Montreuil thought, when Aubrey no longer lived, than the consequence of his silence. When, therefore, I spoke seriously to my new ally of my desire of wreaking ultimate justice on the crimes of Montreuil, I found that his zeal was far from being chilled by my determination—nay, the very cowardice of the man made him ferocious; and the moment he resolved to betray Montreuil, his fears of the priest's vengeance made him eager to destroy where he betrayed. I am not addicted to unnecessary procrastination. Of the unexpected evidence I had found I was most eager to avail myself. I saw at once how considerably Oswald's testimony would lessen any difficulty I might have in an explanation with Gerald, as well as in bringing Montreuil to justice; and the former measure seemed to me necessary to ensure, or at least to expedite, the latter. I proposed, therefore, to Oswald, that he should immediately accompany me to the house in which Gerald was then a visiter; the honest Marie conditioning only for another bottle, which he termed a travelling comforter, readily acceded to my wish. I immediately procured a chaise and horses; and, in less than two hours from the time we entered the inn, we were on the road to Gerald. What an impulse to the wheel of destiny had the event of that one day given!

At another time, I might have gleaned amusement from the shrewd roguery of my companion, but he found me then but a dull listener. I served him, in truth, as men of his stamp are ordinarily served: so soon as I had extracted from him whatever was meet for present use, I favoured him with little farther attention. He had exhausted all the communications it was necessary for me to know; so, in the midst of a long story about Italy, Jesuits, and the wisdom of Marie Oswald, I affected to fall asleep; my companion soon followed my example in earnest, and left me to meditate, undisturbed, over all that I had heard, and over the schemes now the most promising of success. I soon taught myself to look with a lenient eye on Gerald's after-connivance in Montreuil's forgery; and I felt that I owed to my surviving brother so large an arrear of affection for the long injustice I had rendered him, that I was almost pleased to find something set upon the opposite score. All men, perhaps, would rather forgive than be forgiven. I resolved, therefore,

to affect ignorance of Gerald's knowledge of the forgery; and, even should he confess it, to exert all my art to steal from the confession its shame. From this train of reflection, my mind soon directed itself to one far fiercer and more intense; and I felt my heart pause, as if congealing into marble, when I thought of Montreuil, and anticipated justice.

It was nearly noon on the following day when we arrived at Lord ———'s house. We found that Gerald had left it the day before, for the enjoyment of the field-sports at Devereux Court, and thither we instantly proceeded. It has often seemed to me, that if there be, as the Chaldeans fabled, one certain figure pervading all nature, human and universal, it is *the circle*. Round, in one vast monotony, one eternal gyration, roll the orbs of space. Thus moves the spirit of creative life, kindling, progressing, maturing, decaying, perishing, reviving, and rolling again, and so onward for ever through the same course; and thus, even, would seem to revolve the mysterious mechanism of human events and actions. Age, ere it returns to 'the second childishness, the mere oblivion' from which it passes to the grave, returns also to the memories and the thoughts of youth; its buried loves arise—its past friendships rekindle. The wheels of the tired machine are past the meridian, and the arch through which they now decline, has a correspondent likeness to the opposing segment through which they had borne upward, in eagerness and triumph. Thus it is, too, that we bear within us an irresistible attraction to our earliest home. Thus it is that we say, "It matters not where our mid-course is run, but we will *die* in the place where we were born—in the point of space whence *began* the circle, there also shall *it end!*" This is the grand orbit through which Mortality passes only once; but the same figure may pervade all through which it moves on its journey to the grave.* Thus, one peculiar day of the round year has been to some an era, always

* I have not assumed the editorial license to omit these incoherent observations, notwithstanding their close approximation to *jargon*, not only because they seem to occur with a sort of dramatic propriety in the winding-up of the Count's narrative,—the reappearance of Oswald,—the return to Devereux Court, and the scene that happens there;—but also because they appear to be strikingly characteristic of the vague aspirings—the restless and half analyzed longings after something "beyond the visible diurnal sphere," which are so intimately blended with the worldlier traits of the Count's peculiar organization of mind.—Ed.

colouring life with an event. Thus, to others, some peculiar place has been the theatre of strange action, influencing all existence, whenever, in the recurrence of destiny, that place has been revisited. Thus was it said by an arch-sorcerer of old, whose labours yet exist, though perhaps, at the moment I write, there are not three living beings who know of their existence—that there breathes not that man who would not find, did he minutely investigate the events of life, that, in some fixed and distinct spot, or hour, or person, there lived, though shrouded and obscure, the pervading demon of his fate; and whenever, in their several paths, the two circles of being touched, that moment made the unnoticed epoch of coming prosperity or evil. I remember well, that this bewildering, yet not unsolemn reflection, or rather fancy, was in my mind, as, after the absence of many years, I saw myself hastening to the home of my boyhood, and cherishing the fiery hope of there avenging the doom of that love which I had there conceived. Deeply, and in silence, did I brood over the dark shapes which my thoughts engendered; and I woke not from my reverie, till, as the gray of the evening closed around us, we entered the domains of Devereux Court. The road was rough and stony, and the horses moved slowly on. How familiar was every thing before me! the old pollards which lay scattered in dense groups on either side, and which had lived on from heir to heir secure in the little temptation they afforded to cupidity, seemed to greet me with a silent, but intelligible welcome. Their leaves fell around us in the autumn air, and the branches, as they waved towards me, seemed to say, "Thou art returned, and thy change is like our own: the green leaves of *thy* heart have fallen from thee one by one—like us thou survivest, but thou art desolate!" The hoarse cry of the rooks gathering to their rest, came fraught with the music of young associations on my ear. Many a time in the laughing spring had I lain in these groves, watching in the young brood of those citizens of air, a mark for my childish skill and careless disregard of life. We acquire mercy as we acquire thought—I would not *now* have harmed one of those sable creatures for a king's ransom.

As we cleared the more wooded belt of the park, and entered the smooth space, on which the trees stood alone and at rare intervals, while the red clouds, still tinged

with the hues of the departed sun, hovered on the far and upland landscape—like Hope flushing over Futurity—a mellowed, yet rapid murmur, distinct from the more distant dashing of the sea, broke abruptly upon my ear. It was the voice of that brook whose banks had been the dearest haunt of my childhood; and now, as it burst thus suddenly upon me, I longed to be alone, that I might have bowed down my head and wept as if it had been the welcome of a living thing! At once, and as by a word, the hardened lava, the congealed stream of the soul's Etna, was uplifted from my memory, and the bowers and palaces of old, *the world of a gone day*, lay before me! With how wild an enthusiasm had I apostrophized that stream on the day in which I first resolved to leave its tranquil regions and fragrant margin for the tempest and tumult of the world. On that same eve too, had Aubrey and I taken sweet counsel together—on the same eve had we sworn to protect, to love, and to cherish one another—and now!—I saw the very mound on which we had sat—a solitary deer had made it his couch, and as the carriage approached, the deer rose, and I then saw that he had been wounded, perhaps in some contest with his tribe, and that he could scarcely stir from the spot. I turned my face away, and the remains of my ancestral house, rose gradually in view. That house was, indeed, changed: a wide and black heap of ruins spread around; the vast hall, with its oaken rafters and huge hearth, was no more—I missed *that*, and I cared not for the rest. The long galleries, the superb chambers, the scenes of revelry or of pomp, were like the court companions who amuse, yet attach us not; but the hall—the old hall—the old, hospitable hall—had been as a friend in all seasons and to all comers, and its mirth had been as open to all as the heart of its last owner! My eyes wandered from the place where it had been, and the tall, lone, gray tower, consecrated to my ill-fated namesake, and in which my own apartments had been situated, rose, like the last of a warrior band, stern, gaunt, and solitary, over the ruins around.

The carriage now passed more rapidly over the neglected road, and wound where the ruins, cleared on either side, permitted access to the tower. In two minutes more I was in the same chamber with my only surviving brother. Oh, why—why can I not dwell upon that scene—that embrace, that reconciliation?—alas, the wound is

not yet scarred over. I found Gerald, at first, haughty and sullen: he expected my reproaches and defiance—against them he was hardened; he was not prepared for my prayers for our future friendship and my grief for our past enmity, and he melted at once!

But let me hasten over this. I had well nigh forgot that at the close of my history, I should find one remembrance so endearing and one pang so keen. Rapidly I sketched to Gerald the ill fate of Aubrey; but lingeringly did I dwell upon Montreuil's organized, and most baneful influence over him, and over us all; and I endeavoured to arouse in Gerald some sympathy with my own deep indignation against that villain. I succeeded so far as to make him declare that he was scarcely less desirous of justice than myself; but there was an embarrassment in his tone, of which I was at no loss to perceive the cause. To accuse Montreuil publicly of his forgery, might ultimately bring to light Gerald's latter knowledge of the fraud. I hastened to say, that there was no necessity to submit to a Court of Justice a scrutiny into our private gloomy and eventful records. No, from Oswald's communications I had learned enough to prove that Bolingbroke had been truly informed, and that Montreuil had still, and within the last few weeks, been deeply involved in schemes of treason—full proof of which could be adduced, far more than sufficient to ensure his death by the public executioner. Upon this charge, I proposed at the nearest town (the memorable seaport of * * *) to accuse him, and to obtain a warrant for his immediate apprehension—upon this charge I proposed alone to proceed against him, and by it alone to take justice upon his more domestic crimes.

My brother yielded at last his consent to my suggestions. "I understand," said I, "that Montreuil lurks in the neighbourhood of these ruins, or in the opposite islet. Know you if he has made his asylum in either at this present time?"

"No, my brother," answered Gerald; "but I have reason to believe that he is in our immediate vicinity, for I received a letter from him three days ago, when at Lord ——'s, urging a request that I would give him a meeting here, at my earliest leisure, previous to his leaving England."

"Has he really then obtained permission to return to France?"

"Yes," replied Gerald, "he informed me in this letter that he had just received intelligence of his pardon."

"May it fit him the better," said I, with a stern smile, "for a more lasting condemnation. But if this be true, we have not a moment to lose: a man so habitually vigilant and astute, will speedily learn my visit hither, and forfeit even his appointment with you, should he, which is likely enough, entertain any suspicion of our reconciliation with, and confidence in, each other—moreover, he may hear that the government have discovered his designs, and may instantly secure the means of flight. Let me, therefore, immediately repair to * * * *, and obtain a warrant against him, as well as officers to assist our search. In the mean while, you will remain here, and detain him, should he visit you;—but where is the accomplice?—let us sieze *him* instantly, for I conclude he is with you!"

"What, Desmarais?" rejoined Gerald. "Yes, he is the only servant, besides the old portress, which these poor ruins will allow me to entertain in the same dwelling with myself: the rest of my suite are left behind at Lord ——'s. But Desmarais is not now within—he went out about two hours ago."

"Ha!" said I, "in all likelihood to meet the priest—shall we wait his return and extort some information of Montreuil's lurking hole?"

Before Gerald could answer, we heard a noise without, and presently I distinguished the bland tones of the hypocritical Fatalist, in soft expostulation with the triumphant voice of Mr. Marie Oswald. I hastened out, and discovered that the lay-brother, whom I had left in the chaise, having caught a glimpse of the valet gliding among the ruins, had recognised, seized, and by the help of the postilions, dragged him to the door of the tower. The moment Desmarais saw me, he ceased to struggle; he met my eye with a steady, but not disrespectful firmness; he changed not even the habitual hue of his countenance—he remained perfectly still in the hands of his arresters: and if there was any vestige of his mind discoverable in his sallow features and glittering eye, it was not the sign of fear, or confusion, or even surprise; but a ready promptness to meet danger, coupled, perhaps, with a little doubt whether to defy or to seek first to diminish it.

Long did I gaze upon him—struggling with internal

rage and loathing—the mingled contempt and desire of destruction with which we gaze upon the erect aspect of some small, but venomous and courageous reptile—long did I gaze upon him before I calmed and collected my voice to speak—

"So I have *thee* at last! First comes the base tool, and that will I first break, before I lop off the guiding hand."

"So please Monsieur my Lord the Count," answered Desmarais, bowing to the ground; "the tool is a file, and it would be useless to bite against it."

"We will see that," said I, drawing my sword: "prepare to die!" and I pointed the blade to his throat with so sudden and menacing a gesture, that his eyes closed involuntarily, and the blood left his thin cheek as white as ashes: but he shrunk not.

"If Monsieur," said he, with a sort of smile, "*will* kill his poor, old, faithful servant, let him strike. Fate is not to be resisted; and prayers are useless!"

"Oswald," said I, "release your prisoner; wait here, and keep strict watch. Jean Desmarais, follow me!"

I ascended the stairs, and Desmarais followed. "Now," I said, when he was alone with Gerald and myself, "your days are numbered: you will fall, not by my hand, but by that of the executioner. Not only your forgery, but your robbery, your abetment of murder, are known to me; your present lord, with an indignation equal to my own, surrenders you to justice. Have you ought to urge, not in defence—for to that I will not listen—but in atonement. *Can* you now commit any act which will cause me to forego justice on those which you *have* committed." Desmarais hesitated. "Speak," said I. He raised his eyes to mine with an inquisitive and wistful look.

"Monsieur," said the wretch, with his obsequious smile, "Monsieur has travelled—has shone—has succeeded—Monsieur must have made enemies: let him name them, and his poor, old, *faithful* servant will do his best to become the humble instrument of their *fate*."

Gerald drew himself aside, and shuddered. Perhaps till then he had not been fully aware how slyly murder, as well as fraud, can lurk beneath urbane tones and laced ruffles.

"I have no enemy," said I, "but one; and the hangman will do my office upon him; but point out to me the exact spot where at this moment he is concealed, and

you shall have full leave to quit this country for ever. That enemy is Julian Montreuil!"

"Ah, ah!" said Desmarais, musingly, and in a tone very different from that in which he usually spoke; "must it be so, indeed? For twenty years of youth and manhood, I have clung to that man, and woven my destiny with his, because I believed him born under the star which shines on statesmen and on pontiffs. Does dread Necessity now impel me to betray him?—Him, the only man I ever loved. So—so—so! Count Devereux, strike me to the core—I will *not* betray Bertrand Collinot."

"Mysterious heart of man," I exclaimed, inly, as I gazed upon the low brow, the malignant eye, the crafty lip of this wretch, who still retained one generous and noble sentiment at the bottom of so base a breast. But if it sprung there, it only sprung to wither!

"As thou wilt," said I, "remember, death is the alternative. By thy birth-star, Jean Desmarais, I should question whether perfidy be not *better luck* than hanging—but time speeds—farewell; I shall meet thee on thy day of trial."

I turned to the door to summon Oswald to his prisoner. Desmarais roused himself from the reverie in which he appeared to have sunk.

"Why do I doubt?" said he, slowly. "Were the alternative his, would he not hang me as he would hang his dog, if it went mad and menaced danger? My very noble and merciful master," continued the Fatalist, turning to me, and relapsing into his customary manner, "it is enough! I can refuse nothing to a gentleman who has such insinuating manners and incomparable cambric. Montreuil *may be* in your power this night; but that rests solely with me. If I speak not, a few hours will place him irrevocably beyond your reach. If I betray him to you, will Monsieur swear that I shall have my pardon for past *errors?*"

"On condition of leaving England," I answered, for slight was my comparative desire of justice against Desmarais; and since I had agreed with Gerald not to bring our domestic records to the glare of day, justice against Desmarais was not easy of attainment, while, on the other hand, so precarious seemed the chance of discovering Montreuil before he left England, without certain intelligence of his movements, that I was willing to forego any less ardent feeling, for the speedy gratification of

that which made the sole surviving passion of my existence.

"Be it so," rejoined Desmarais; "there is better wine in France! And Monsieur, my present master—Monsieur Gerald, will you too pardon your poor Desmarais for his proof of the great attachment he always bore to you."

"Away, wretch!" cried Gerald, shrinking back; "your villany taints the very air!"

Desmarais lifted his eyes to heaven, with a look of appealing innocence; but I was wearied with this odious farce.

"The condition is made," said I; "remember, it only holds good if Montreuil's person is placed in our power. Now explain."

"This night, then," answered Desmarais, "Montreuil proposes to leave England by means of a French privateer, or pirate, if that word please you better. Exactly at the hour of twelve, he will meet some of the sailors upon the seashore, by the Castle Cave; thence they proceed in boats to the islet, off which the pirate's vessel awaits them. If you would seize Montreuil, you must provide a force adequate to conquer the companions he will meet. The rest is with you; my part is fulfilled."

"Remember! I repeat, if this be one of thy inventions, thou wilt hang."

"I have said what is true," said Desmarais, bitterly; "and were not life so very pleasant to me, I would sooner have met the rack."

I made no reply; but summoning Oswald, surrendered Desmarais to his charge. I then held a hasty consultation with Gerald, whose mind, however, obscured by feelings of gloomy humiliation, and stunned perhaps by the sudden and close-following order of events, gave me but little assistance in my projects. I observed his feelings with great pain; but that was no moment for wrestling with them. I saw that I could not depend upon his vigorous co-operation; and that even if Montreuil sought him, he might want the presence of mind and the energy to detain him. I changed therefore the arrangement we had first proposed.

"I will remain here," said I, "and I will instruct the old porteress to admit to me any one who seeks audience with you. Meanwhile, Oswald and yourself, if you will forgive and grant my request to that purport, will repair

to * * * *, and, informing the magistrate of our intelligence, procure such armed assistance as may give battle to the pirates, should that be necessary, and succeed in securing Montreuil; this assistance may be indispensable; at all events, it will be prudent to secure it: perhaps for Oswald alone, the magistrates would not use that zeal and expedition, which a word of *yours* can command."

"Of mine!" said Gerald, "say rather of yours; you are the lord of these broad lands!"

"Never, my dearest brother, shall they pass to me from their present owner; but let us hasten now to execute justice, we will talk afterward of friendship."

I then sought Oswald, who, if a physical coward, was morally a ready, bustling, and prompt man; and I felt that I could rely more upon him than I could at that moment upon Gerald: I released him therefore of his charge, and made Desmarais a close prisoner, in the inner apartment of the tower; I then gave Oswald the most earnest injunctions to procure the assistance we might require, and to return with it as expeditiously as possible: and, cheered by the warmth and decision of his answer, I saw him depart with Gerald, and felt my heart beat high with the anticipation of midnight and retribution.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Catastrophe.

It happened, unfortunately, that the mission to * * * * was indispensable. The slender accommodation of the tower forbade Gerald the use of his customary attendants, and the neighbouring villagers were too few in number, and too ill-provided with weapons, to encounter men cradled in the very lap of danger; moreover, it was requisite above all things that no rumour or suspicion of our intended project should obtain wind, and by reaching Montreuil's ears, give him some safer opportunity of escape. I had no doubt of the sincerity of the Fatalist's communication; and if I had, the subsequent conversation I held with him, when Gerald and Oswald were gone, would have been sufficient to remove it. He was evi-

dently deeply stung by the reflection of his own treachery, and, singulary enough, with Montreuil seemed to perish all his wordly hopes and aspirations. Desmarais, I found, was a man of much higher ambition than I had imagined, and he had linked himself closely to Montreuil, because from the genius and the resolution of the priest he had drawn the most sanguine auguries of his future power. As the night advanced, he grew visibly anxious, and having fully satisfied myself that I might count indisputably upon his intelligence, I once more left him to his meditations, and alone in the outer chamber, I collected myself for the coming event. I had fully hoped that Montreuil would have repaired to the tower in search of Gerald, and this was the strongest reason which had induced me to remain behind; but time waned, he came not, and at length it grew so late, that I began to tremble, lest the assistance from * * * * should not arrive in time.

It struck the first quarter after eleven: in less than an hour my enemy would be either in my power, or beyond its reach; still Gerald and our allies came not—my suspense grew intolerable, my pulse raged with fever; I could not stay for two seconds in the same spot; a hundred times had I drawn my sword, and looked eagerly along its bright blade; "Once," thought I, as I looked, "thou didst cross the blade of my mortal foe, and to my danger, rather than victory; years have brought skill to the hand which then guided thee, and in the red path of battle thou hast never waved in vain. Be stained but once more with human blood, and I will prize every drop of that blood beyond all the triumphs thou hast brought me!" Yes, it had been with a fiery and intense delight, that I had learned that Montreuil would have companions to his flight in lawless and hardened men, who would never yield him a prisoner without striking for his rescue; and I knew enough of the courageous and proud temper of my purposed victim, to feel assured that, priest as he was, he would not hesitate to avail himself of the weapons of his confederates, or to aid them with his own. Then would it be lawful to oppose violence to his resistance, and with my own hand to deal the death-blow of retribution. Still as these thoughts flashed over me, my heart grew harder, and my blood rolled more burningly through my veins. "They come not, Gerald returns not," I said, as my eye dwelt on the horologe, and saw the minutes creep one after the other—"it matters not—HE at least

shall not escape!—were he girt by a million, I would single him from the herd; one stroke of this right hand is all that I ask of life, then let them avenge him if they will." Thus resolved, and despairing at last of the return of Gerald, I left the tower, locked the outer door, as a still further security against my prisoner's escape, and repaired with silent, but swift strides to the beach by the Castle Cave. It wanted about half an hour to midnight; the night was still and breathless, a dim mist spread from sea to sky, through which the stars gleamed forth heavily, and at distant intervals. The moon was abroad, but the vapours that surrounded her gave a watery and sicklied dulness to her light, and wherever in the niches and hollows of the cliff, the shadows fell, all was utterly dark, and unbroken by the smallest ray: only along the near waves of the sea, and the whiter parts of the level sand were objects easily discernible. I strode to and fro, for a few minutes, before the Castle Cave; I saw no one, and I seated myself in stern vigilance upon a stone, in a worn recess of the rock, and close by the mouth of the Castle Cave. The spot where I sat was wrapped in total darkness, and I felt assured that I might wait my own time for disclosing myself. I had not been many minutes at my place of watch, before I saw the figure of a man approach from the left; he moved with rapid steps, and once when he passed along a place where the wan light of the skies was less obscured, I saw enough of his form and air to recognise Montreuil. He neared the Cave—he paused—he was within a few paces of me—I was about to rise, when another figure suddenly glided from the mouth of the Cave itself.

"Ha!" cried the latter, "it is Bertrand Collinot—Fate be lauded!"

Had a voice from the grave struck my ear, it would have scarcely amazed me more than that which I now heard. Could I believe my senses? the voice was that of Desmarais, whom I had left locked within the inner chamber of the tower. "Fly," he resumed, "fly instantly, you have not a moment to lose—already the stern Morton waits thee—already the hounds of justice are on thy track, tarry not for the pirates, but begone at once."

"You rave, man! What mean you; the boats will be here immediately. While you yet speak methinks I can descry them on the sea. Something of this I dreaded

when, some hours ago, I caught a glimpse of Gerald on the road to * * * *: I saw not the face of his companion, but I would not trust myself in the tower—yet I must await the boats—flight is indeed requisite, but *they* make the only means by which flight is safe!"

"Pray, then, thou who believest, pray that they may come soon, or thou diest—and I with thee. Morton is returned—is reconciled to his weak brother. Gerald and Oswald are away to * * * *, for men to seize and drag thee to public death. I was arrested—threatened; but one way to avoid prison and cord was shown me. Curse me, Bertrand, for I embraced it. I told them that thou wouldst fly to-night, and with whom. They locked me in the inner chamber of the tower—Morton kept guard without. At length I heard him leave the room—I heard him descend the stairs, and lock the gate of the tower. Ha! ha! little dreamed he of the wit of Jean Desmarais. *Thy* friend must scorn bolt and bar, Bertrand Collinot. They had not searched me—I used my instruments—thou knowest that with those instruments I could glide through stone walls—I opened the door—I was in the outer room—I lifted the trap-door which old Sir William had had boarded over, and which thou hadst so artfully and imperceptibly replaced, when thou wantedst secret intercourse with thy pupils—I sped along the passage—came to the iron door—touched the spring thou hadst inserted in the plate which the old knight had placed over the key-hole—and have come to repair my coward treachery—to save and to fly with thee. But, while I speak, we tread on a precipice. Morton has left the house, and is even now, perhaps, in search of thee."

"Ha! I care not if he be," said Montreuil, in a low, but haughty tone. "Priest though I am, I have not assumed the garb, without assuming also the weapon, of the layman. Even now I have my hand upon the same sword which shone under the banners of Mar; and which once, but for my foolish mercy, would have rid me for ever of this private foe."

"Unsheath it now, Julian Montreuil!" said I, coming from my retreat, and confronting the pair.

Montreuil recoiled several paces. At that instant a shot boomed along the waters.

"Haste, haste," cried Desmarais, hurrying to the waves, as a boat, now winding the cliff, became darkly visible;

"haste, Bertrand, here are Bonjean and his men—but they are pursued!"

Once did Montreuil turn as if to fly; but my sword was at his breast, and stamping fiercely on the ground, he drew his rapier, and parried and returned my assault; but he retreated rapidly towards the water while he struck; and wild and loud came the voices from the boat, which now touched the shore.

"Come—come—come—the officers are upon us; we can wait not a moment!" and Montreuil, as he heard the cries, mingled with oaths and curses, yet quickened his pace towards the quarter whence they came. His steps were tracked by his blood—twice had my sword passed through his flesh; but twice had it failed my vengeance, and avoided a mortal part. A second boat, filled also with the pirates, followed the first; but then another and a larger vessel bore blackly and fast over the water—the rush and cry of men were heard on land—again and nearer a shot broke over the heavy air—another and another—a continued fire. The strand was now crowded with the officers of justice. The vessel beyond forbade escape to the opposite islet. There was no hope for the pirates but in contest, or in dispersion among the cliffs or woods on the shore. They formed their resolution at once, and stood prepared and firm, partly on their boats—partly on the beach around them. Though the officers were far more numerous, the strife—fierce, desperate, and hand to hand—seemed equally sustained. Montreuil, as he retreated before me, bore back into the general *melée* and, as the press thickened, we were for some moments separated. It was at this time that I caught a glimpse of Gerald; *he* seemed also then to espy me, and made eagerly towards me. Suddenly he was snatched from my view. The fray relaxed: the officers, evidently worsted, retreated towards the land, and the pirates seemed once more to entertain the hope of making their escape by water. Probably they thought that the darkness of the night might enable them to baffle the pursuit of the adverse vessel, which now lay expectant and passive on the wave. However this might be, they made simultaneously to their boats, and among their numbers I descried Montreuil. I set my teeth with a calm and prophetic wrath. But three strokes did my good blade make through that throng before I was by his side; he had at that instant his hold upon the boat's edge, and he stood

knee-deep in the dashing waters. I laid my grasp upon his shoulder, and my cheek touched his own as I hissed in his ear, "I am with thee yet!" He turned fiercely—he strove to shake off my grasp—as well might the tiger unlock the curl of the boa—the boat pushed away, and his last hope of escape was over. At this moment the moon broke away from the mist, and we saw each other plainly, and face to face. There was a ghastly, but set despair in Montreuil's lofty and proud countenance, which changed gradually to a fiercer aspect as he met my gaze. Once more, foot to foot and hand to hand, we engaged; the increased light of the skies rendered the contest more that of skill than it had hitherto been, and Montreuil seemed to collect all his energies, and to fight with a steadier and a cooler determination. Nevertheless the combat was short. Once my antagonist had the imprudence to raise his arm and expose his body to my thrust: his sword grazed my cheek—I shall bear the scar to my grave—mine passed twice through his breast, and he fell, bathed in his blood, at my feet.

"Lift him!" I said, to the men who now crowded round; they did so, and he unclosed his eyes, and glared upon me as the death pang convulsed his features, and gathered in foam to his lips. But his thoughts were not upon his destroyer, nor upon the wrongs he had committed, nor upon any solitary being in the linked society which he had injured.

"Order of Jesus," he muttered, "had I but lived three months longer, I——."

So died Julian Montreuil.

CONCLUSION.

Montreuil was not the only victim in the brief combat of that night; several of the pirates and their pursuers perished, and among the bodies we found Gerald. He had been pierced, by a shot, through the brain, and was perfectly lifeless when his body was discovered. By a sort of retribution, it seems that my unhappy brother received his death wound from a shot, fired [probably at random] by Desmarais; and thus the instru-

ment of the fraud he had tacitly subscribed to, became the minister of his death. Nay, the retribution seemed even to extend to the very method by which Desmarais had escaped; and the subterranean communication which had been secretly reopened to deceive my uncle, made the path which had guided Gerald's murderer to the scene which afterward ensued. The delay of the officers had been owing to private intelligence, previously received by the magistrate to whom Gerald had applied, of the number and force of the pirates, and his waiting in consequence for a military reinforcement to the party to be despatched against them. Those of the pirates who escaped the conflict, escaped also the pursuit of the hostile vessel; they reached the islet, and gained their captain's ship. A few shots between the two vessels were idly exchanged, and the illicit adventurers reached the French shore in safety; with them escaped Desmarais, and of him, from that hour to this, I have heard nothing —so capriciously plays Time with villains!

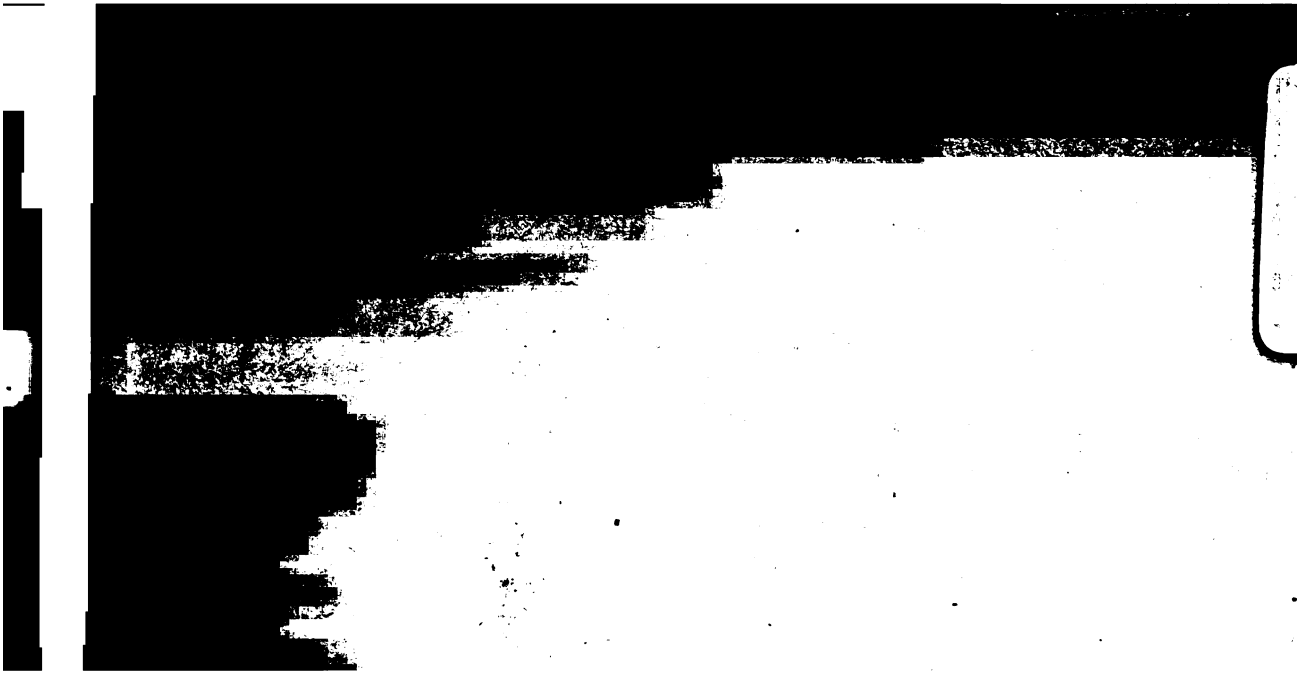
Marie Oswald has lately taken unto himself a noted inn on the North Road, a place eminently calculated for the display of his various talents; he has also taken unto himself a WIFE, of whose tongue and temper he has been known already to complain with no Socratic meekness; and we may therefore opine that his misdeeds have not altogether escaped their fitting share of condemnation.

Succeeding at once, by the death of my poor brother, to the Devereux estates, I am still employed in rebuilding, on a yet more costly scale, my ancestral mansion. So eager and impatient is my desire for the completion of my undertaking, that I allow rest neither by night nor day, and half the work will be done by torch-light. With the success of this project terminates my last scheme of Ambition.

Here, then, at the age of thirty-four, I conclude the history of my life. Whether in the star which, as I now write, shines in upon me, and which a romance, still unsubdued, has often dreamed to be the bright prophet of my fate, something of future adventure, suffering, or excitation, is yet predestined to me; or whether life will muse itself away in solitudes which surround the home of my past childhood, and the scene of my present retreat, creates within me but slight food for anticipation or conjecture. I have exhausted the sources of those feelings which flow, whether through the channels of anxiety or

of hope, towards the future; and the restlessness of my manhood having attained its last object, has done the labour of time, and bequeathed me the indifference of age.

If love exists for me no more, I know well that the memory of that which has been, is to me far more than a living love is to others; and perhaps there is no passion so full of tender, of soft, and of hallowing associations, as the love which is stamped by death. If I have borne much, and my spirit has worked out its earthly end in travail and in tears, yet I would not forego the lessons which my life has bequeathed me, even though they be deeply blended with sadness and regret. No! were I asked what best dignifies the present, and consecrates the past; what enables us alone to draw a just moral from the tale of life; what sheds the purest light upon our reason; what gives the firmest strength to our religion; and, whether our remaining years pass in seclusion or in action, is best fitted to soften the heart to man, and to elevate the soul to God, I would answer with Lassus, it is "EXPERIENCE!"

THE END.

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